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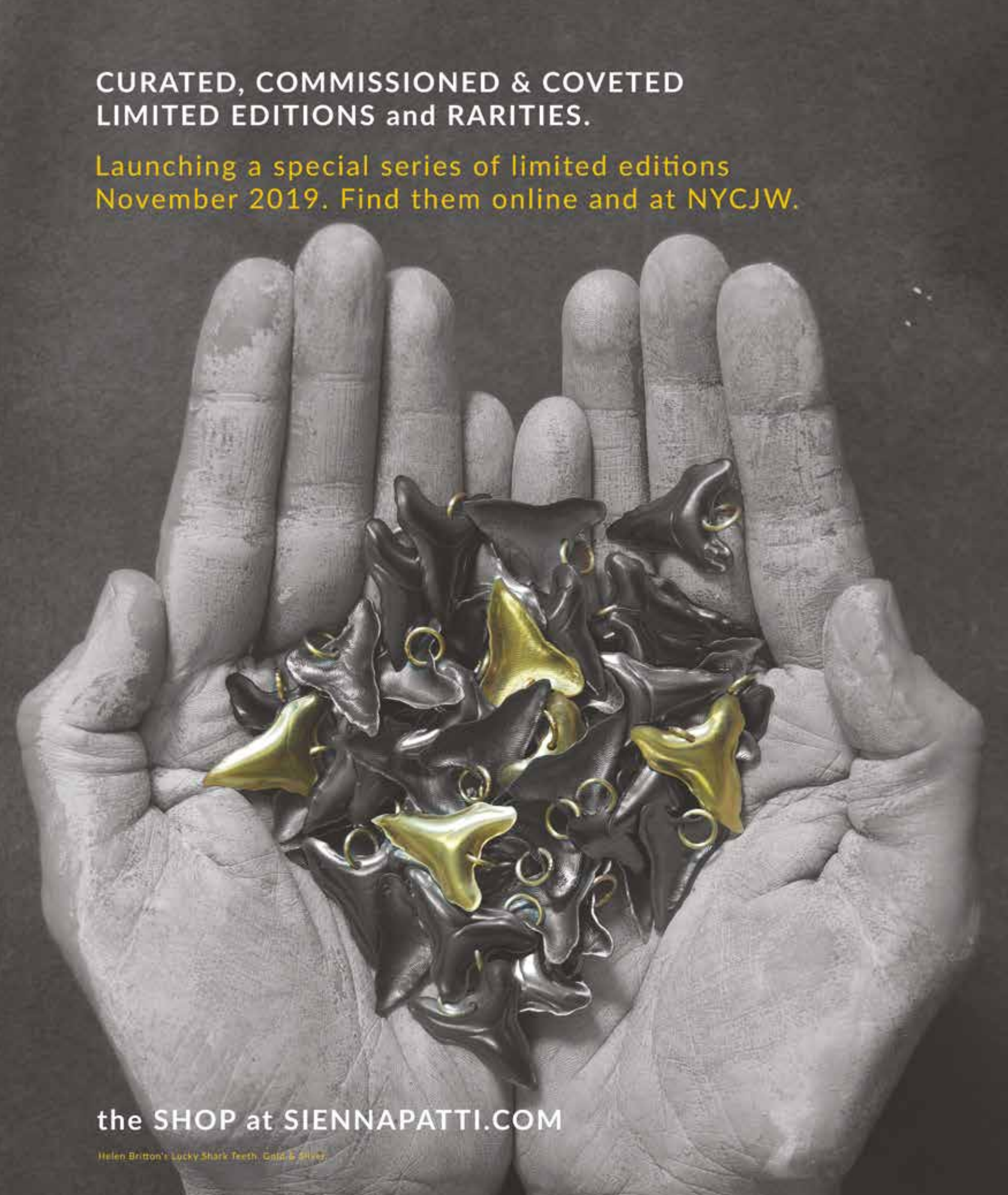
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To twentieth-century philosopher Jacques Derrida, known as the father of deconstruction, language was slippery. He rejected the notion of "universal truth," focusing instead on the disconnect between language and meaning. This may sound complex, and it is. But, with this concept in mind, let us entertain Derrida's assertion by asking: What gap might exist between the term "metalsmith" and the reality? And what about applying the same question to the term "jewelry"? Do these words refer to material, form, process, or all of the above? Can one apply a metalsmithing approach to materials other than metal? Or a jewelrymaking ethos to other types of art? The answers, of course, are slippery.

To some, commenting on materiality in a publication with a title that alludes to a material might seem redundant. However, the metalsmithing and jewelry fields are increasingly more flexible in regard to material than the title of this publication might suggest. Artists continually defy the notion of fixed truths when it comes to media and process, further widening the gaps between language and reality.

Take, for example, the subject of "In the Studio." Torben Hardenberg's exquisite works blend a goldsmith's mastery with an array of materials that ranges from precious metals and gems to those that are less so, like acrylic, coral, and shells. Acclaimed Palawa artist Lola Greeno's career is rooted in preserving and maintaining the cultural traditions of women's work in lutruwita (the Aboriginal name of Tasmania). Greeno uses materials like maireener shells and muttonbird feathers as a way of connecting colonization's effects on Palawa peoples in the present to their ancestors in the past.

Norman Cherry's account of Poland's annual Festival of Silver features a selection of works by the 2019 award winners. Several of the artists featured indicate that the silver used to create their works comes from prizes awarded during previous festivals; they are physical manifestations of the relationship between tradition and material.

In our last feature, we return to the Southern Hemisphere in Liesbeth den Besten's essay on New Zealand jewelry artist Lisa Walker. Known for using uncommon and sometimes unappealing materials, Walker takes an approach to jewelrymaking that threatens to unravel the seams of the definitions of jewelry and metalsmithing. In many instances, she bursts through them entirely.

As we close this volume, and look forward to celebrating the fortieth year of this publication in 2020, I invite you to share your reflections, insights, and memories. What does *Metalsmith* mean to you, both as a word and as a publication? What do you hold dear, and what can you do without? I look forward to hearing from you: editor@snagmetalsmith.org

—Adriane Dalton, Editor

The mission of *Metalsmith* is to explore, analyze, promote, and document excellence and innovation in the field of jewelry and metalsmithing. In achieving this goal, SNAG will produce and oversee the direction and content of a publication that will serve as a significant resource for the metalsmithing field. The editorial content of *Metalsmith* will emphasize contemporary activities, makers, and ideas and incorporate supportive content, relevant critical issues, and the exchange of viewpoints.

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"Not a Bow" (detail)
Stainless Steel

Photo: Gary Bridges

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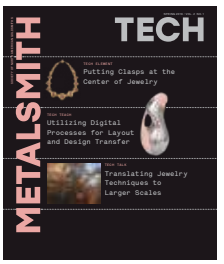
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Putting Clasps at the Center of Jewelry
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Metalsmith Tech 2.1 / Spring 2019

CLASPING THE ISSUE

I read the article on jewelry clasps in *Metalsmith Tech* with interest. I'm a jewelry collector, and jewelry wearer, and I think about clasps a lot. In their article (Hidden Powers: Putting Clasps at the Center of Jewelry, pages 20–23), Anna Tabakhova and Alison Antelman talked at length about making clasps interesting and beautiful.

There was only one sentence that noted that clasps should be "comfortable to use, and secure." Well, I suppose if the piece of jewelry is only going to sit in a museum, it makes sense to prioritize the appearance of the clasp. But if I am going to wear the piece, I have to be able to operate the clasp, perhaps behind my head, at the end of an evening or first thing in the morning, with only moderately dexterous fingers.

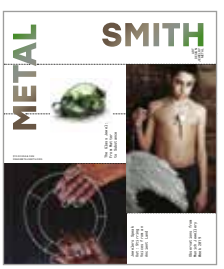
I own a lot of jewelry, mainly necklaces, and one of the first things I consider is, how easy is this piece to get on and off?

I've rejected pieces because the maker's design is so clever that the clasp is virtually impossible to operate. One night, I took wire clippers to a necklace because I could not get it off any other way.

Whenever I speak to young jewelers, I talk about clasps. If they want to actually sell their pieces, they need to take into account the wearability and functionality of their clasps. Otherwise, the work is sculpture, not jewelry.

—Marion Fulk

Alison Antelman
Mini Metro Bracelet, 2015
oxidized silver, 18 karat and 22 karat gold, rubies, black and white diamonds
6½ × ½ × ¼ in.
Photo: Eric Smith



Metalsmith 39.3 / Summer 2019

CORRECTION

Findings (*Metalsmith* issue 39.3) contained a mis-print of the first name of artist and instructor Jeanette K. Caines.

The *Metalsmith* staff regrets the error.

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Judith Neugebauer
Jewelry

Photo: Cole Rodger

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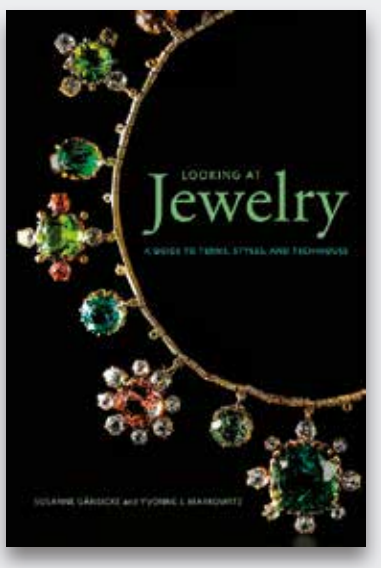

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Susanne Gänsicke and Yvonne J. Markowitz

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—*Adornment, The Magazine of Jewelry & Related Arts*

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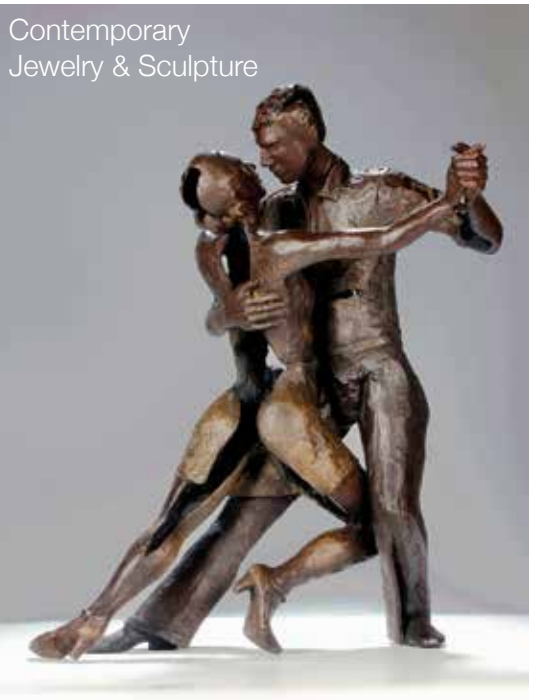
Cloisonné enamel necklace and earrings



Tango bronze sculpture

Photos by Bob Barrett

HelenHosking.com

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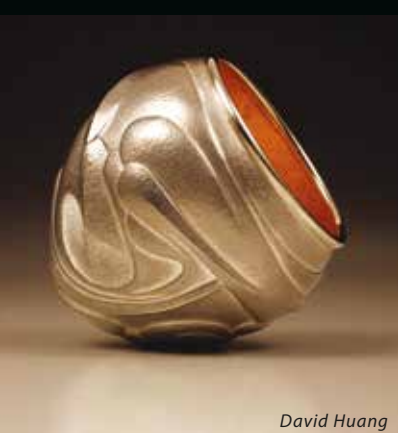
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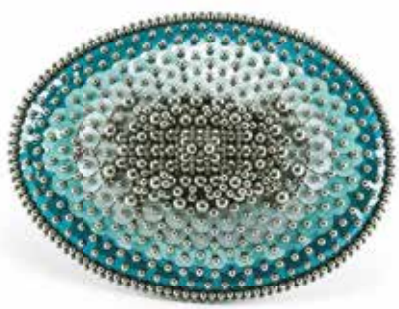

From top: Lola Brooks, *dreamcatcher*, stainless steel, 14K gold solder, 10k gold, vintage rose-cut garnets
Hiroko Yamada, *Infinity Bracelet,* silver, copper, 18K gold
Jaydan Moore, *Specimen 22,* vintage silver-plated platters
Ben Dory, *Blue Sequin Ring*, stainless steel, sequins

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NEW & NOTEWORTHY

BY BELLA NEYMAN

THE DEMOLITION ON PHILADELPHIA'S JEWELERS' ROW

Joni Mitchell wrote a song about it happening in the '70s, and we all know the story too well: big-time developer moves into town and paves over parks, buildings, and history. In 2016, residents of Philadelphia's Jewelers' Row found out that Toll Brothers City Living planned on building a high-rise condo tower at the corner of 7th and Sansom streets. To make space for this project, five structurally sound buildings from 702 to 710 Sansom Street would need to be demolished. These buildings housed some of the oldest businesses on Jewelers' Row, which dates back to 1851, making it the oldest diamond district in America.

Residents and business owners sprang to action, speaking to politicians and setting up a GoFundMe campaign to help the jewelers pay for a high-powered lawyer who could take this case to court on their behalf. May 31, 2019, was the original deadline for vacancy, but most tenants were granted a thirty-day extension period. The jewelers who have been evicted, like Jane Theis, see this as the end of their careers. "I've been on Jewelers' Row forty-two years; in 704 Sansom over thirty years. I was not able to find studio space and have put all my tools and equipment in storage. My future is very uncertain and I'm heartbroken."

Theis also said that "the developers and the city repeatedly said they would reach out to the displaced tenants with help in finding new places, but it never happened. Toll Brothers in particular made verbal commitments about offering such help, but they were empty promises every step of the way."[1]

A painter living on Jewelers' Row, Katie Dillon Low started the Save Jewelers' Row website soon after the news of the development broke. Low said that most residents have been hopeful over the course of the last three years that a resolution would be reached. Many of the businesses have relocated; some have stayed on the block, while others have gone out of state. For jewelers who are used to conducting the entirety of their business in one district, with all the necessary resources (like stone setters and casting) within their reach, it is difficult to not have them close by. A website like Save Jewelers' Row is entirely necessary, because visiting the official website for the Jewelers' Row District doesn't hint that there is any turmoil. A trendy business improvement district (BID) site geared to millennials, inviting everyone to "come explore where the past meets the present," doesn't mention that this historic district's past is endangered.

The remaining [Jewelers' Row] tenants not only feel insecure, even if they are "safe" for now, but they worry about how the development will change the neighborhood. The buildings that are being torn down are considered to be the gateway into the district, but most of the early nineteenth- and twentieth-century buildings here are only three or four stories tall. The Toll Brothers Tower, originally proposed at sixteen stories, was nearly doubled in size to twenty-nine, and eventually planned at twenty-three, after much resentment from government agencies. And of course, years of construction isn't the type of hustle and bustle that's good for business. If anything, these "road blocks" are just that, especially in a market in which online stores are already outperforming brick and mortar counterparts. Toll Brothers City Living spokesman Tim Spreitzer told the *Billy Penn* newsletter that they are "committed to ensuring that our Washington Square development is respectful of the Jewelers' Row heritage and is appropriate for the block....We are continuing the due process of development, which has included—and will continue to include—meeting with several community groups, the City and the Civic Design Review board."[2]

One question remains: Why did the landlords decide to sell to Toll Brothers? Robert Pupo, the owner of three of the buildings being demolished, conceded to *Billy Penn* that his business was doing poorly. To add insult to injury, there was an issue with securing historic designations in time for the final vote on the demolition of the buildings. Since November 2018, there has been a pending nomination with Philadelphia Register of Historic Places to make all of Jewelers' Row a historic district. Once this happens, it may help save other

Images courtesy Jane Theis

buildings in the district from meeting the same fate as those on Sansom Street.

To show support for Jewelers' Row or to learn more:
www.gofundme.com/savejewelersrow
www.savejewelersrow.com/the-history-of-an-icon

TARIFFS UPDATE

It's been several months since *Metalsmith*'s article, **"Will Jewelers and Metalsmiths Fall Prey to Additional Tariffs in the US-China Trade War?"** (Findings, 39.2), was published, and only recently did we get some clarity on the tariffs proposed by the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR). In May, the State Department held a meeting in New York that was attended by many industry groups and jewelry companies. They indicated that specifics about the origins of materials used in jewelry must be known, or they will be subject to new regulations.

In an email sent by the Accessories Council on May 20, Brent Cleveland, Executive Director, The Fashion Jewelry & Accessories Trade Association, wrote, "The government believes that jewelry materials and other minerals are funding conflict and rogue regimes, specifically mentioning Iran, Venezuela, and certain countries in Africa. But it's also interested in more than those areas. It is imperative that jewelry buyers and producers know the source of 'any piece or component that is imported.'"

The argument presented by the jewelers is that it is often difficult to know the full origin of every component, given that materials used are often recycled and also traded through a secondary market. Organizations like the Responsible Jewelry Council have standards in place, such as the Chain of Custody certification, which requires "companies to have a policy and risk management framework for conflict sensitive sourcing practices." Ultimately, May's meeting emphasized six main points: the "threat assessment" is higher than it has been in the past; the Kimberley Process is inadequate to solve the current problems; ensuring a chain of custody for all materials is important to the US government; the government plans to hold US suppliers and purchasers accountable; more industry education is needed on these issues; and the government is looking to enhance enforcement of existing rules and regulations, specifically mentioning those pertaining to money laundering.

In addition, on May 9, "cultured pearls; diamonds; precious stones, including rubies, sapphires, and emeralds; silver jewelry; gold necklaces; synthetic gemstones; and others" were released as part of the List #4, or the group of products that the USTR says would incur tariffs of up to twenty-five percent. According to Rob Bates, news director of JCK Online, tariffs such as these would be detrimental to the retail landscape as a whole, with studies showing that as many as 12,000 retailers will potentially shut their doors.[3] For the jewelry industry, in which many single-proprietor and family-owned businesses still have a chance to thrive over the big-box brands, this could be devastating.

What has been most difficult is the uncertainty surrounding the potential trade war. Just when the jewelry industry thought it was safe from upheaval, on July 1, President Trump announced that List #4 tariffs have been suspended for the "time being." News came in August that ten percent tariff increases will go in effect on List #4 items on September 1. Our advice is to keep checking the web page https://ustr.gov/ for updates.

For more information:
www.accessoriescouncil.org
www.responsiblejewellery.com/chain-of-custody-certification

1 Email correspondence between author and Jane Theis, July 1, 2019. / **2** Cassie Owens, "Why This Jewelers' Row Landlord Sold to Toll Brothers," *Billy Penn*, January 6, 2017. https://billypenn.com/2017/01/06/why-this-jewelers-row-landlord-sold-to-toll-brothers / **3** Rob Bates, "Jewelry Likely to Be Hit With Tariffs in Trump Trade War," *JCK Online*, May 14, 2019, https://www.jckonline.com/editorial-article/jewelry-china-trade-war-tariffs/

MELISSA FINELLI: FORGING AHEAD

BY ANDREA DINOTO

Melissa Finelli
Lily Pad Earrings, 2018
2 x 1¼ in.
Sterling silver
Photo: Debra Adelson

"I SEE MY PIECES AS LIVING THINGS," says Boston-based jeweler Melissa Finelli. "To me they're little creatures dug up from the ground or that might have come from outer space. I find them to have this curious personality." Certainly intriguing, even a bit otherworldly, Finelli's sculptural designs, produced under the rhyming business name Melle Finelli, are forged from either sterling silver or gold so that each piece is unique and has a strong, hand-wrought presence. At Craft/New York last summer, her collection was arrayed in diffused sunlight that cast the sculptural qualities of her work into high relief. *Succulent*, a pendant necklace, featured a rimmed disk occupied by curious, cuplike protrusions. Another pendant, *Dimples*, bellied out like a soft silver blanket over a spiny animal. *Lily Pad* earrings and necklaces, a signature design in limited production, featured crinkled, hand-hammered petals, while oversize rings sported elements ranging from raw golden nuggets to silver bubbles and UFO-ish disks.

Melissa Finelli
Feeler, 2017
1¾ x 1¾ x 1½ in.
Sterling silver, 18k gold
Photo: Debra Adelson

The New York show was one of more than a dozen for Finelli last year; the most demanding schedule, she says, she'd ever attempted. Admittedly happiest and most at home working in her spacious, light-filled Boston studio—"I get lost in the process. It's part of my inner peace."—she nevertheless has embraced the demanding show circuit, garnering numerous best-in-show awards along the way. "It's a very interesting way to make a living, and it's very hard," she says. "You can't fly across the country for a hundred dollars anymore, and different shows have different markets." At the Smithsonian, she reports, people came by who had seen her at other shows, "but at the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival," she says, "it's an international crowd that opens your work up to people who don't ordinarily see it." She has also noticed aesthetic differences: "Kansas is conservative, while big pieces do well out West."

Regardless of location, Finelli's oversize rings often command special attention; for example, Artrider.com featured her 18k gold *Feeler* ring as its 2019 website icon. A silver bowl bursting with golden sproutlike forms, the piece (long since sold, at $2,200) remains on Finelli's website shop with a "Sold Out" label because, she says, "I want people to know my style and the range of my work." In fact "Sold Out" signs appear on various pieces to demonstrate a common style thread. "It's important, especially with expensive items, for people to realize uniqueness," she says, "and they do invest in it, and I will make something in the mode." Earrings, among her most popular and affordable pieces, vary in size and are often asymmetrical and unmatched, one big, one small. "One woman bought a pair in 18k gold," says Finelli, "and sent me an email with a picture of herself playing her

Melissa Finelli
Succulent, 2019
2½ in. diameter
Sterling silver
Photo: Shannon Owen

Melissa Finelli with a client in her studio

Photo: Shannon Owen

cello, the small earring on the side with the cello handle."

Working as a jeweler since 2004, Finelli was trained in basic metalsmithing at the North Bennet Street School in Boston where she received certification in 1996. In 2003 she began an exploratory year studying sculpture at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in the city, an experience she credits with turning her towards the fabrication of sculptural jewelry exclusively in metal. Starting out, she held down many different jobs to get by, but since 2008 she's been entirely self-supporting. Still, "beyond craft shows," says Finelli, "it's important to find alternative ways of getting the work seen, especially by twentysomethings, who are comfortable buying online." In this regard, Instagram, which she keeps updated with show information, is essential and highly effective at making connections that can lead to orders, but more is needed, she says, beyond Internet and website sales and a presence in galleries.

In 2016 she launched Melle Finelli Studio, a retail gallery in Boston's South End. "I thought it might supplement my income so that I could stay at home a little more," she says. But the ambitious project closed in December of 2019. Featuring jewelry and sculptural objects by local and national artists, "it gave me great pleasure," says Finelli, "but ultimately proved too difficult to sustain financially." On the positive side, the experience sparked the idea of collaborations with other artists. Not so much a money maker, "collaboration is an aesthetic experiment," she says, "an opportunity to loosen up and become freer in the studio through working with alternative materials." Finelli and Sarah Jane Hassler, an acrylic jewelry artist from San Francisco, exchanged materials to create a new collection called MJ Jeweller Lab, which, she says, "almost sold out at the Smithsonian show." With Grand Rapids artist Christy Klug, a well-known enamellist, Finelli has created Frovolus, a collaboration whose aim is simply to create a playful body of work in which the two use materials outside of their specialties. During the 2019 SNAG conference gallery crawl in Chicago, she and Klug opened a pop-up shop where their "fun, light" shared vision was displayed alongside Finelli's sculptural jewelry and Klug's enamel collection. "It was not at all profitable," she says, "but we were delighted to see so many people really looking, investigating, asking questions—a super engaging crowd. You don't always get that response and reactivity at craft shows." Finelli believes that pop-ups in informal settings—"with music and fun, in a boutique, say"—may hold potential for drawing in a possibly younger audience. "We plan to keep trying new ways to get our work seen, and I think the key to this will be working together." In the meantime, she says, "I make a modest living and I'm very proud of my accomplishments."

http://www.mellefinellijewelry.com/
https://www.instagram.com/mellefinelli/

Andrea DiNoto writes about art, craft, and design.

TORBEN HARDENBERG

BY LINDA DYETT

Torben Hardenberg at his thirty-year-old wooden work table

Photo: Uffe Groes

DENMARK HAS A LONGSTANDING REPUTATION for its minimalist design aesthetic. Yet Torben Hardenberg, the artisan widely regarded as that country's preeminent goldsmith, couldn't be more of an exception. A maverick by any measure, whose occasionally bombastic Baroque-Art Nouveau style is at odds with directions in jewelrymaking just about anywhere in the world today, Hardenberg seems particularly out of whack in this futuristic Nordic social democracy. Nonetheless, he's officially been deemed a national treasure, for which he receives an annual government stipend.

At the start of his nearly half-century career, Hardenberg rejected the prevailing Scandinavian midcentury modern ethos. "Too passé, too easy," he said during a spring 2019 visit to New York. His work is steeped in the past—though he gives his swirling filigree designs a quirky surreal-contemporary edge, and in recent years he's tried his hand at a more clean-cut approach.

Operating instinctively in a zone in between art jewelry and fine jewelry, Hardenberg is the goldsmith equivalent of a couturier, taking cues from and creating personal narratives or tableaux for the coterie (including royalty) who commission his work. Speaking of his clients, he says, "When you're seen through a piece of jewelry, it's almost a love affair." The public, meanwhile, can view his work in the permanent collections of the Louvre, the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum , and other world-class museums, in gallery shows, and when it's sold at auction.

One important influence was his childhood visits to an aunt's "enchanted, dilapidated garden, with rotting trees," which left Hardenberg with a taste for raw nature. Another influence was his accountant father, an antiques collector who gave his son his love of classical Rome and Greece—vividly affirmed in *Antique Smile,* a brooch portraying a serenely beautiful face of indeterminate gender (Hardenberg's, perhaps?), in patinated bronze with a hematite eye; it's in the permanent collection of the Musée des Arts Décoratifs at the Louvre.

Hardenberg's father urged his son to become a goldsmith despite his severe dyslexia, a condition that dogged him as he pursued his training. He was expelled from four apprenticeships, including one at Georg Jensen, and finally gained his credentials in 1972. But dyslexia also seems to have benefited him. Unburdened by written words and sentences, he's been free to fantasize, using gemstones, charm-size mussel shells, cherubs, and monkey craniums as his vocabulary.

A third career marker was the Royal Danish Theater, where Hardenberg served an early stint making props, including masks. Signifiers of make-believe, masks became one of his motifs. Theatrical phantasmagoria is likewise essential to his output.

Cosmic life-and-death issues concern him too. Much of his work in recent decades has been focused on mortality. He lost many friends to AIDS, and was left depleted after the death of his companion of nineteen years, perhaps finding a bit of recompense in making a gold and silver ring whose title, *SAVN*—Danish for *missing*—is spelled out in an open book, with a raw diamond, signifying cancer, front and center. "That book is the diary of our life together," Hardenberg explains.

Darwinian survival with a whimsical spin, another Hardenberg theme, is evident in a gold spiral on which swirling sperm vie to enter an ovum; in a silver owl with a mouse in its stomach; and in his silver flies with mother-of-pearl wings resting on acrylic sugar cubes. These recall *objets de vertu*

Torben Hardenberg
Fly on Sugar Cube, 1976
Pendants displaying a sterling silver fly with mother of pearl wings, alighting on an acrylic sugar cube. Inspired by the Fellini film *La Dolce Vita*.
Courtesy: Private collection, France
Photo: Torsten Graae

Torben Hardenberg
Coral Collar, completed in 2019
24k gold, antique coral, silver, black raw diamond, dyed pink diamond, teardrop diamond, eight black pearls, sapphire, emerald, turquoise, antique cameo, natural snail shell, sculpted coral hand, sculpted Colombian frog
Courtesy: Private collection, Denmark
Photo: Per Myrehed/Galleri Sebastian Schildt

by Gustav Fabergé, with whom Hardenberg finds a kinship. The highlight of his stay in New York, he relates in awe, was a visit to A La Vieille Russie, the decorative arts gallery specializing in works by the Russian goldsmith and his jewelry house. Like Fabergé, he has a penchant for elegant drollery.

In 1978, Hardenberg was discovered by Margrethe II, the Danish queen. "She entered my life like a good fairy, swung her magic wand over me, and gave me my identity—as a serious and respected craftsman and goldsmith." One of the pieces that her late husband, Prince Henrik, commissioned for her was an ornate allegorical brooch, in 18 and 24k gold, oxidized sterling silver, and brilliant-cut diamonds and emeralds, displaying Margrethe as a bare-breasted goddess of the hunt, clasping a stag (the prince) around its neck. Below are two small deer (their sons), as well as cabochon turquoise stones the prince brought back from Egypt. That brooch is on display at *Worthy of a Queen*, a royal goldsmithing exhibit being held at Christiansborg Palace in Copenhagen, September 27–December 15, 2019.

Hardenberg works out of a 200-square-foot studio (he calls it his "backstage") in his antique-filled apartment in a nineteenth-century building, opposite a tranquil lake just north of central Copenhagen. On a wooden table lie his 130-year-old chasing hammer, acetylene torch, drill, soldering iron, files, cutters, table saw, and repousse implements. Early on, he made his own chasing tools, before farming out their production to craftsmen in India. It's with these "basic and primitive implements, some of them used in the eleventh century," that Hardenberg renders his complex designs. For his undulating gold tendrils, all the hammering, soldering, and manipulating are done by hand, while a toothbrush is used for setting gemstones in 24k gold. To make his tiny, sometimes articulated silver skulls, cherubs, grasshoppers, frogs, and crustaceans, he does one-off carving, then adjusts, makes molds, casts, and re-casts in wax. Though these items are produced in multiples, "no two are exactly alike. I hate doing the same thing twice." As this consummate craftsman puts it, "I'd sell my soul to the devil if he makes a good story out of it."

Invariably inspired by his materials, Hardenberg obtains his gemstones as well as add-on ornaments wherever he can, often while traveling—almost letting fate choose them. Within an hour of arriving in New York, he bought a hunk of Baltic amber at a Midtown flea market. This he will carve into a salt dish sculpture. And on a trip to Colombia he bought a cache of emeralds, then waited twenty-five years before using them. They spent those years idling behind a glass door (out of reach for Hardenberg's prying cats) of the studio's wooden cabinet, sharing space with boxes of semiprecious stones, Egyptian artifacts, porcelain figurines, cameos, death's heads, and miscellaneous bric-a-brac. He calls that jam-packed cabinet "a storage bin of my mind." Or rather, it's his incubator. There, sooner or later, these odd items reveal their purpose for his designs.

Linda Dyett is a New York–based writer and editor who formerly lived in Denmark.

Torben Hardenberg
Nautilus Goblet, 1978
Pedestal-mounted Nautilus pompilius shell, resting on the royal yacht Dannebrog. Eighty-five diamonds, 18k gold tendrils, oxidized sterling silver, a large emerald, two rubies, three pieces of raw lapis lazuli, and red coral. A secret drawer contains cufflinks, chest button, pearls and diamonds. This was a wedding anniversary gift from Margrethe II, Queen of Denmark, to HRH Prince Henrik.
Courtesy: Private collection, France
Photo: Torsten Graae

CHUNGHI CHOO: MENTORSHIP AS ARTISTIC PRACTICE

BY KATE BONANSINGA AND JANE MILOSCH

Jocelyn Châteauvert
Lily Clouds, 2009
Artist-made flax paper, pigment, fine silver
Site-specific installation view, Ashley River Tower Chapel (ceiling)
10 x 12 x 12 ft.
Collection of the Medical University of South Carolina, Charleston, SC
Photo by the artist

"STUDENTS ARE MY FINEST WORK," states Chunghi Choo, who taught art at University of Iowa for nearly fifty years, during which time she tirelessly investigated new materials, techniques, and ideas.[1] In 1968, Dr. Frank Seiberling, Jr., then director of School of Art and Art History at the University of Iowa, invited Choo to launch the metalsmithing program, which she led until she retired from teaching in 2015. Choo earned her MFA in 1965 from Cranbrook Academy of Art, where artists in residence learn, teach, and create in studios adjacent to those of graduate students. Choo applied this model of continuous learning and teaching by example in Iowa. Many of her former students remark that Choo created a familial environment, and affectionately refer to her as "Mama Choo." Jocelyn Chateauvert remembers, "She wasn't so steeped in academia…this was very refreshing. Students could set up their own paradigms…It was an open institution with her."[2] Choo added electroforming to her repertoire of teaching and making in 1971, then silent metal forming in the late 1970s, and wire mesh forming in 1989.[3]

Though Choo is an accomplished metalsmith, one of her primary messages to her students was that art can be created from nearly any material and any process. Lonna Keller (MFA 1998), for example, uses rubber tubes to create jewelry that encompasses the entire torso. Chateauvert (MFA 1990) creates both jewelry and room-sized installations from handmade paper forms that evoke aquatic life. Eun-Kyung Suh (MFA 2002) references the experience of Korean diaspora in boxes sculpted from silk organza. For *Leaf Book*, Meiing Hsu (MFA 1994) coats the pages of open books with metal; copper wire extends erratically, alluding to the impact of the printed word that literally extends from the pages. These are only a few examples of the accomplished artists who studied with Choo, and are living proof of her power and versatility as an educator.

For more information on Chunghi Choo and her legacy as an educator, see the forthcoming publication: *Chunghi Choo and Her Students: Contemporary Art and New Forms in Metal*, Jane Milosch, editor. Stuttgart: Arnoldsche Art Publishers, anticipated Fall 2019; with contributions by Kate Bonansinga, Lois Jecklin, Jack Lenor Larsen, Jane Milosch, and Paul J. Smith.

Chieko Arai
Maturity Ring, 2008
Aluminum, mirror. Hand formed.
2½ x 2 x 2 in.
Collection of the artist
Photo by the artist

Kate Bonansinga is Director of the School of Art at the University of Cincinnati. She was the founding Director of the Stanlee and Gerald Rubin Center for the Visual Arts at the University of Texas at El Paso.

Jane Milosch is Founding Director of the Smithsonian Provenance Research Initiative; former Chief Curator, Renwick Gallery, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C.

1 Po Li Loo, "Be Remarkable," *The University of Iowa Magazine*, April 21, 2008. / **2** Telephone conversation with the author, August 18, 2017. / **3** Silent metal forming involves bending, rolling and forming an unbroken piece of flat metal into a three-dimensional form entirely by hand. It requires neither pneumatic tools nor soldering; therefore the process is free of air and noise pollution.

Clockwise from above left:

Douglas Wunder
Shadow Heart Pendant, 2015
Titanium, 18k gold bi-metal, silver. Constructed, layered, cold connected, soldered
2½ x 1¾ x ½ in.
Collection of the artist
Photo: Larry Sanders

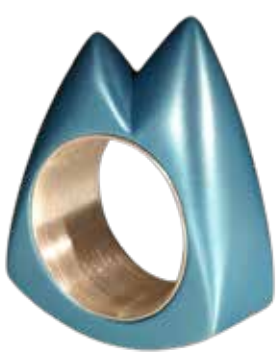
Leslie Hollis
Alchemy, 2016
Sterling silver, Corian, gold leaf, white rice
4½ x 5¾ x 2¾ in.
Collection of the artist
Photo by the artist

Chunghi Choo
Fleur (Rouge), 2001
Electroformed copper, acrylic paint
15 x 12½ x 9 in.
Private Collection
Photo: Peter Krumhardt

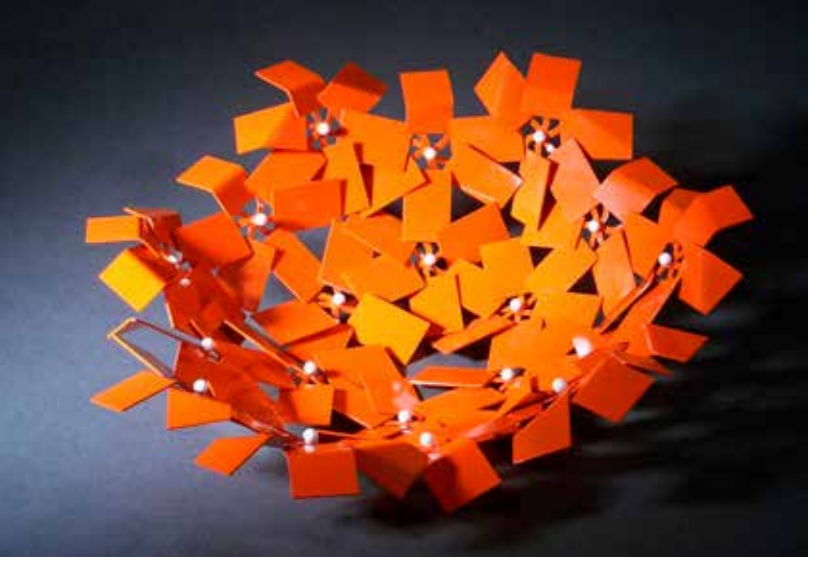
Cody Bush
Trillion II (bracelet), 2009
ABS plastic, aluminum, automotive paint, stainless steel bolts. CAD/CAM, airbrushed
7½ x 2¼ in.
Photo by the artist

Lonna Keller
Extreme, 2001
Rubber, plastic zip ties, stainless steel. Woven.
25 x 20 in.
Collection of the artist
Photo: Michael Kreiser

Meiing Hsu
Leaf Book I, 2005
Copper, gold leaf, PVC coated copper wire. Fabricated, oxidized
4 x 12 x 12 in.
Private collection
Photo: Kuen-Lung Tsai



Jon M. Ryan
Blue Mountain Ring, 2005
Aluminum, sterling silver. Carved, anodized, fabricated
1½ x 1 x ½ in.
Collection of the artist
Photo by the artist



Delbert Jackson
Nexus, 2012
Aluminum, plastic, brass. Laser cut
8 x 8 x 28 in.
Collection of Lois Jecklin
Photo by the artist

Monica Correia
Flowerbud Stool, 2012
Bamboo plywood, CAD,
CNC, and hand finished
17 x 19 x 19 in.
Production piece
Photo by the artist

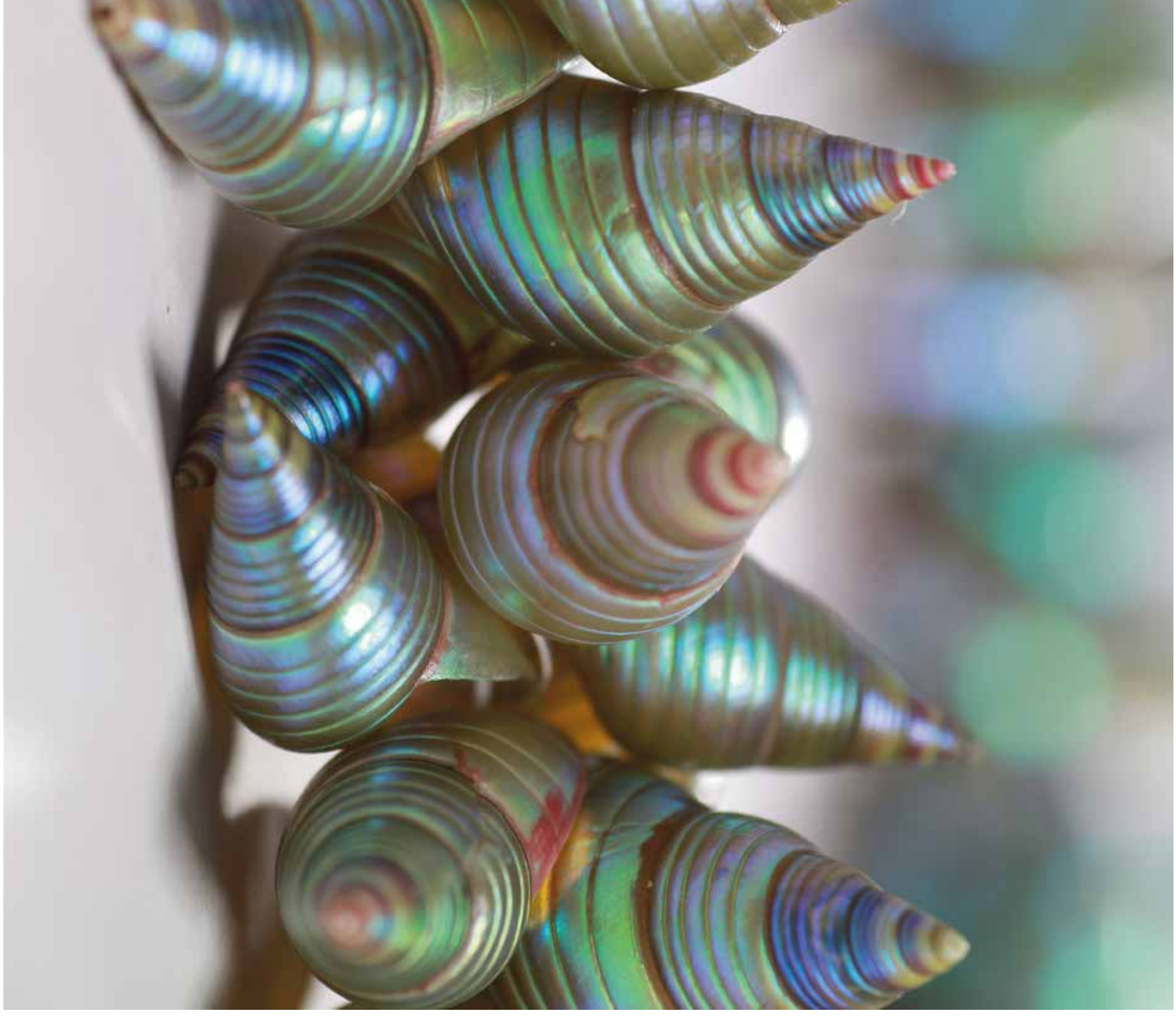
Eun-Kyung Suh
Fragmentary Memory, 2012
Fabrics from estate/garage
sale, thread, fabric transfer,
images from estate sale houses
3½ x 3½ x 2½ in. (each box)
Photo: Matt Nicholas

STRINGING STORIES and CARRYING CULTURE

The Art of Lola Greeno

By Celia Dottore

Above:
palawa kani language place names, 2014
Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery
Photo: John Leeming
Image © courtesy the artist



Working against the odds, leading Aboriginal artist and shell worker Lola Greeno (b. 1946) has forged a three-decade career transforming traditional cultural practice into a contemporary movement.

Greeno was the first Indigenous Australian recipient of the Living Treasures: Masters of Australian Craft award, which was accompanied by the retrospective *Lola Greeno: Cultural Jewels* (2014); in 2019 she also received the Red Ochre Award for Lifetime Achievement.[1] As an artist, arts worker, and curator, Greeno has earned the title of "cultural warrior" in recognition for her sustained commitment to the time-honored practices of her female elders and ancestors.[2]

Untitled (maireener necklace) (detail), 1999
Flinders University Art Museum
Photo: Flinders University Art Museum
Image © courtesy the artist

Best known for creating exquisite maireener shell necklaces, she is among a small group of makers responsible for the revival and regeneration of traditional women's work in *lutruwita* or Tasmania—a place often left off the world map.

Found in the treacherous waters of Bass Strait between the Furneaux Group and mainland Tasmania, these highly prized and increasingly rare maireener shells have been central to *palawa* (Tasmanian Aboriginal) traditions for tens of thousands of years.[3] As important markers of esteem, shell necklaces belong to a rich and ancient history of adorning the body for daily, social, and ceremonial practice. First recorded by French explorers at the end of the eighteenth century, maireener shell necklaces were widely collected as trade goods and souvenirs up until the early nineteenth century. It is at this time that they came to signify a brutal chapter in Australia's past: the genocide of First Nations people in colonial Tasmania between 1803 and 1832. Hence, the continuation of this enduring cultural practice is a symbolic act of resistance and survival for Palawa people living today.

Greeno began stringing shells around the age of fifty, as way of reconnecting with her cultural heritage and the traditional knowledge typically passed down from mothers to daughters. Growing up in a tight-knit Aboriginal community on *truwana* or Cape Barren Island—which was formally established and controlled as an Aboriginal Reserve—and later Flinders Island, Greeno recalls the beach as an extension of her backyard, "just a stone's throw away."[4] She recognizes spending time together as a family, sharing knowledge and practicing culture, as a formative experience. "That was probably the grounding of the culture for me, because I can remember walking on the beach with Mum and the other elder women," she says.

Now based on mainland Tasmania in Launceston, Greeno returns to the islands at least once a year to harvest the tiny maireener shells when the tides are right. It is a practice that requires dedication, patience, and intimate knowledge of the seasons and local environment.

teunne (king maireener shell crown) (with detail on previous spread), 2013
Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery
Photo: John Leeming
Image © courtesy the artist

The use of feathers, bones, and shells in Greeno's recent work is emblematic of the Palawa way of life, and in her words, is "very much part of our island culture using the natural elements to survive."

As the maireeners feed off kelp forests that grow in deep waters, they can only be accessed during low spring tides when the water is shallow enough to wade through. It is slow, painstaking work. The impressive king maireeners are found elsewhere in slippery kelp rock pools and are more difficult and dangerous to source. According to Greeno, they are "not easy to come by, and my prediction is that in ten years they could be virtually wiped out. So we try to not collect everything. We would like to think there is something left to breed for the future." As the shells are becoming increasingly scarce, it is difficult to keep up with demand. "I remember a gallery asking for a green [maireener] necklace and it had been two years since I had enough shells," says Greeno. "That gives you an idea of how it's not easy and not plentiful."

Collecting is only one stage of the process; preparing the shells for stringing can take several months. The live shells are frozen, then left outdoors to "rot out," sometimes with the aid of a little raw meat to attract the flies—a tip passed down to Greeno from her mother. Greeno says, "That is something that we have to do today because of the climate, weather, and insects. Everything is changing." The shells are then rinsed and cleaned with a chemical solution—a closely guarded recipe—revealing the iridescent layer just below the surface. They are rinsed again and laid out to dry before sorting and piercing. Piercing the brittle shells takes practice and skill with a sharp instrument. Traditionally they were pierced with sharpened bone or tooth and threaded onto animal sinew; however, contact with European voyagers and seafarers during the 1790s brought access to sewing needles and cotton thread, encouraging the stringing of smaller shells and longer necklaces.

Numerous other shells are also used in necklace production and can be found washed up along local beaches. These are largely known by their common names, such as toothies, cat's teeth, black crow, stripy button, penguin, and rice shells. Ranging in size, shape, color, and texture, they provide an array of choices for creating patterns and designs that express both individual creativity and continuing family traditions. Particular combinations may hold meaning, like a signature or private language shared between families, and can identify makers, along with where and when the shells were sourced.

Recently, Greeno's work has expanded to incorporate a broader repertoire of materials, which reference both her personal history and current concerns around sustainability and climate change. In 2011, she was commissioned to make new work responding to the Robinson's Cup, which set her on a new artistic path. The silver cup, held by Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston, was presented to George Augustus Robinson (1791–1866) in 1835 for his "successful conciliation" (submission) of the Tasmanian Aboriginal people.[5] In 1803 the British invaded Van Diemen's Land (later named Tasmania) resulting in the Black War, a period of intense violence that decimated ninety percent of the indigenous population. In 1830, at the height of the conflict, the Black Line was established as an attempt to corral the remaining First Nations people through an organized human front. Though the campaign had limited success, Robinson was able to negotiate a treaty surrendering the small group of surviving Palawa people to live in exile on an unoccupied settlement on Flinders Island, where they were subject to exposure, starvation, and disease.

As a response, Greeno created *Nine Cultural Gifts*, dedicated to the nine

milebena armlets, 2014
Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery
Photo: John Leeming
Image © courtesy the artist

distinct regions of Tasmania and their traditional inhabitants. "Whether I lived in those days or today, I would provide food items and fur as clothes, and that's how those items came into being," she says. Referring specifically to her possum fur creations, she says, "I made those pieces with Truganini in mind." Truganini (1812–1876), a woman who is widely considered the last known full-blooded Palawa, is a significant historical figure often pictured wearing a shell necklace or possum fur cloak. During her lifetime, Truganini lost her entire family and was victim to repeated violence and sexual assault at the hands of male convicts, settlers, soldiers, and sealers. She was imprisoned on Flinders Island and later moved to a camp at Oyster Cove, near Hobart, where by 1873 she was the sole survivor. Despite her pleas for a respectful burial prior to her death, her remains were placed on display at the Hobart Museum until 1947 before finally being laid to rest one hundred years later.

By acknowledging the trials Truganini endured and her fortitude in the face of adversity, Greeno's work recognizes the experiences of all First Nations people that have survived in Tasmania since colonization—including her own family. Greeno recalls that times were tough growing up on the islands alongside her nine siblings, and that her mother made shell necklaces to help support them. "The first necklaces that Mum sold were to a Minister Cloudesdale who would come to the island," she says. "He bought a few necklaces from the women; it helped to feed and clothe the children." This resourcefulness was critical to sustaining life on the islands, including surviving off natural food sources like kangaroo, muttonbird, and shellfish. The use of feathers, bones, and shells in Greeno's recent work is emblematic of this way of life, and in her words, is "very much part of our island culture using the natural elements to survive."

Muttonbirding, for example, is a longstanding seasonal activity that takes place on nearby Babel Island, whereby families would travel to catch, process, and preserve enough muttonbirds to sustain

menna necklace, 2013
Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery
Photo: John Leeming
Image © courtesy the artist

them throughout the year. By incorporating these feathers in her *yolla necklace* (2012), Greeno elevates their significance by giving them an almost majestic status. Detailed recollections of family muttonbirding trips, as well as memories of "Dad and the boys snaring roos" are important sources of inspiration. Her *teerunna necklace* (2012) incorporates large sections of kangaroo vertebrae painted with locally sourced ochre pigments. While the application of ochre and bone references ancient traditions of adorning the body, the three-dimensional nature of this work transports it into the realm of contemporary sculptural object.

Greeno's considered approach to materials and their construction is also apparent in her *menna necklace* (2013), featuring more than two hundred Tasmanian echidna quills. It is an impressive piece resulting from both historical associations and current implications—and the quills were obtained from roadkill. Other items, such as abalone shells, are sourced from modern-day farming practices, which in turn enable the artist to select the best quality shells to work with. Her beautifully constructed *carner necklace* (2012) seamlessly blends together tradition and innovation with a stunning gradation of silver abalone shells, emphasizing the preciousness of this

teerunna necklace (with detail), 2012
Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery
Photo: John Leeming
Image © courtesy the artist

With ever increasing concern around the global impact of climate change, Greeno's story draws attention to the critical issues of our time and encourages rethinking around where we have come from and where we are going for the sake of future generations.

carner necklace (with detail), 2012
Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery
Photo: John Leeming
Image © courtesy the artist

valuable resource. Further works by Greeno also feature significant medicinal and cultural materials traditionally used by Aboriginal people.

For instance, *kalikina* or bull kelp is a fibrous seaweed that has helped sustain life and culture on the islands for millennia, used in the creation of water carriers. Greeno has reclaimed this thick leathery material in her series of contemporary breastplates, *palawa kani language place names* (2014), prefacing these traditional names and their common use. She says Palawa *kani* (language) "is a way of identifying us as Tasmanian Aboriginal people, to link our culture and objects to a unique language and place." Here, the black, glossy surface of the kelp gives the works a particularly "eerie feel" in relation to the dark, problematic history they recall. Silver and brass breastplates were implemented widely across colonial Australia and used strategically to obtain land, goods, and services to the detriment of Indigenous Australians. Thus, they remain conflicted and contentious items for many people living today.

Greeno's ambition of "striving to create new work in recognition for the struggles our people encountered" bears witness to aspects of Australia's colonial past that are not widely acknowledged or accepted in the mainstream.[6] Her sincere and direct approach to cultural materials and their broader significance provides a rich and remarkable contribution to the field of contemporary art, craft, and design. Since the early 1990s when a major Australian institution acquired her very first pieces, steady interest from museums, galleries, and private collectors established Greeno's place as a celebrated

lulada and luna necklaces (detail), 2013
Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery
Photo: John Leeming
Image © courtesy the artist

contemporary Australian artist. She says, "The necklaces were always a strong point, but then I sort of moved sideways." While still retaining the history and practices of her people, this shift in her work explores the difficult social, cultural, and political history of the islands and nation at large. It is this engagement with tradition and creative reimagining of culture that acknowledges the enduring value and power embedded in the ongoing production of this work.

No longer dismissed under the guise of cultural artifact, women's craft, or tourist souvenir, Tasmanian Aboriginal shell work has become central to preserving women's cultural heritage. This preservation is the focus of several cultural renewal projects conceived by Greeno, resulting in the exhibition *kanalaritja: an unbroken string* (2016), which positions contemporary Tasmanian artists firmly on the map. In this fast-paced world, the slow art of shell stringing offers a profound and tangible link to the past while also communicating shared experiences of living in the world today. With ever increasing concern around the global impact of climate change, Greeno's story draws attention to the critical issues of our time and encourages rethinking around where we have come from and where we are going for the sake of future generations.

Celia Dottore is an emerging arts writer and curator based in Adelaide, South Australia. She is the recipient of the 2019 Radiant Pavilion Emerging Writers Grant.

Established in 2015, Radiant Pavilion: Melbourne Contemporary Jewellery and Object Biennial celebrates the many aspects of the field through a curated program of international events including exhibitions, talks, performances, and urban interventions. With a commitment to supporting artists' professional and creative development, each year the program also includes a range of targeted programs and initiatives. In 2019 Radiant Pavilion linked two early career practitioners with selected professionals for a six-month mentorship.

Celia Dottore was mentored by Dutch writer, curator and art historian Liesbeth den Besten, culminating in this article for Metalsmith *magazine. Yu Fang Chi worked with Australian curator Kate Rhodes on Insistent. Gestures, an exhibition for the 2019 program.*

These opportunities were supported by the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria, and the City of Melbourne Arts Grants Program. Radiant Pavilion ran 7–15 September 2019. radiantpavilion.com.au

RADIANT PAVILION

CREATIVE VICTORIA CITY OF MELBOURNE

1 *Lola Greeno: Cultural Jewels* is the eighth exhibition in Australian Design Centre's *Living Treasures: Masters of Australian Craft* series, a national tour of an iconic artist whose body of work epitomizes the best in Australian craft. Following the tour, which ran for five years (2014–2019), the works in the exhibition were acquired by the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston for the collection. / **2** A term used in Julie Gough, 'Honouring the past/making a future', *Lola Greeno: cultural jewels*, Object: Australian Design Centre, Surry Hills, 2014, p.113. / **3** Aboriginal shell middens provide archaeological evidence of Aboriginal occupation and land use patterns over tens of thousands of years. Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania, *Aboriginal Middens*, Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Waters and Environment, Tasmania, 2017. / **4** All quotes are Lola Greeno in conversation with the author, April 2019. / **5** The full inscription on Robinson's Cup reads: *Presented to Mr G.A. Robinson by the Inhabitants of the District of Bothwell, Van Diemen's Land. In testimony of their acknowledgement of the benefit the colony has derived from the successful conciliation of the Aborigines of the island, effected by him, 1835.* / **6** Lola Greeno in Brenda L Croft, *Beyond the Pale: Contemporary Indigenous Art*, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, 2000, p.29.

Clockwise from top left:

A "diamond" made by the Gallery of Art in Legnica for the festival's inauguration (Legnica's square market)

Festival's inauguration

Festival's inauguration (sculpture *Julek* on square in Legnica)

Volunteers during the festival's inauguration

Guests of Festival's inauguration

All photos on spread: M. Banaszkiewicz (Legnica 2019)

Legnica Festival of Silver

By Norman Cherry

If you had wished to visit the Polish city of Legnica during the years of Soviet occupation, you would not have found it on any official map.

Legnica was one of the "secret" garrison towns which outsiders were not encouraged to visit. It even had a concrete wall built through a section of the city to separate the military occupiers from the Polish inhabitants. It may have been hard for most people to locate or identify but, because of its strategic importance, it was on every NATO map of Lower Silesia as a likely target.

Not, you might think, a very likely setting for one of the most important international festivals of contemporary jewelry. Yet, largely due to the efforts of a small and committed group of enthusiastic professionals, that is precisely what it became. The first event took place in 1978 and comprised just two exhibitions organized by Jan Buchinski, then-director of BWA Gallery, and Marek Nowaczyk, an enthusiastic young art historian, designer, and jewelry activist.

Over time, the festival has matured, and Legnica has come to be known in Poland as the capital of contemporary jewelry. The event has developed from being a national celebration and promotion of all things Polish to a truly international forum. The city and the festival survived Soviet occupation, the crushing pre-freedom period of martial law, and the advent of democracy, and have thrived during Poland's membership of the European Union, even recently, as politics has once more intruded somewhat on artistic freedom and expression.

The city's wealth is based on the historic silver and copper mining and refining industry of Lower Silesia, which dates back to the Middle Ages. Indeed, KGHM Polska Miedz SA (Polish Copper), apparently the second biggest silver refiner in the world, is still active today and remains one of the major sponsors of the annual event. This is not a pretty town or one to be found on any normal tourist trail. Yet it is an important art center, and for six weeks every late spring and early summer it becomes a major jewelry destination as it hosts the annual Festival of Silver. The hub from which the

Above:
A "diamond" made by the Gallery of Art for the festival's inauguration (Legnica's square market). From left: Sham Patwardhan-Joshi (India/Germany), prof. Georg Dobler (Germany)
Photo: M. Banaszkiewicz (Legnica 2019)

Private opening of the exhibition by Aleksandra Szulc
Photo: M. Banaszkiewicz (Legnica 2019)

Paweł Kaczyński – Poland
Silver Pillow, 2019
Silver, goose feathers
Awarded the GRAND PRIX of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage + 1 kg of silver founded by the KGHM Polska Miedź S.A. company
Photo: Paweł Kaczyński

several satellite exhibitions emanate is the municipal art gallery, Galeria Sztuki (Gallery of Art), the successor to BWA.[1]

Such pre-eminence seems all the more impressive given that Legnica is not a city with a recognized core artistic community. However, the city and regional authorities have been very supportive since the festival's relatively modest beginnings and, even in these politically uncertain times, continue to be so. The national Ministry of Culture remains the principal sponsor. In fact, the event has successfully taken place every year, save 1983, when the brutal imposition of martial law caused it to close down early.

Last year I chaired the selection panel for the annual Silverart Competition, the central event of the Festival, and in 2010 I was one of the featured artists. So, as juror and participant, I have had two complementary experiences.

In 2018 there were twelve exhibitions in total: the successful competition entries and prizewinners; specially invited artists and groups; international schools of jewelry; carefully chosen emerging artists; and one exhibition of works which were not selected from the competition entries—a sort of contemporary Salon des Refusés. In recent years the annual Amberif Awards exhibition of amber jewelry has also been a feature, a token of the cooperation which exists between Legnica and Gdańsk, the home of Amberif.

This really *is* a festival, a celebration of our discipline. In the early years, the emphasis was certainly on Polish and European artists, mainly those from Central and Northern European countries. However, the base has been noticeably widening, attracting competition submissions from around the world. The list of invited artists covers an equally wide geographical area. The 2019 event included jewelers' groups from Chile and Romania, both countries with a vibrant emerging jewelry field. Established and emerging artists, Polish and international, were featured, and one exhibition, *HAND MADE: Polish Silversmithery Jewelry (1945–1979)*, showcased work from that period when the subject began to blossom. Notable as well has been the growth of competition entries from Asia.

The accompanying one-day seminar offered opportunity for education, debate, and promotion. Given its title, *Boundaries of Global Art*, I did wonder if more effort should be made to broaden the dialogue and invite speakers to do more than promote their own practice or institution. Beyond the formal presentations, lectures, and discourse the seminar should encourage the informal peer-to-peer discussion which is so valuable at international gatherings of artists, collectors, and curators.

The jury deliberations in 2018 were detailed, lively, occasionally combative, but at all times good-natured and courteous. We were impressed by the many interpretations of the theme: *Illusion*.

The event has successfully taken place every year, save 1983, when the brutal imposition of martial law caused it to close down early.

Prof. Georg Dobler (Germany) during the festival's inauguration
Photo: M. Banaszkiewicz (Legnica 2019)

We noted that there appeared to be some national characteristics manifesting themselves amongst the broadly international approaches. We discussed cultural difference and internationalization, how artists interpret different cultural traditions: how they sometimes accommodate it, assimilate it, and attempt to understand it, with varying degrees of success. Sometimes these are issues within a broadly European context but, once work by artists from non-European traditions is in the mix, the discussions become more complex and complicated. Certain entrants may not have fully comprehended the theme in question, yet, in their own often idiosyncratic ways, produced successful and engaging work.

This year, thoughts about cultural assimilation and the future of international aesthetics were prompted by the touring exhibition *21 Grammes*, curated by Ruudt Peters in conjunction with the China Academy of Art in Hangzhou. The Western belief that the human soul weighs 21 grams, allegedly scientifically proven in the early twentieth century, is the theme. However, for many Chinese this is not considered a suitable subject, and there was at one point some opposition from the Chinese authorities. In the West there is, of course, no such problem, but it is all too easy to unintentionally create controversy in such circumstances. Either way, it was nonetheless a show of variable quality, albeit one which offered plenty of material for lively discussion about cultural difference and assimilation.

The success of the Festival of Silver is all the more stunning given the shaky foundations of the contemporary jewelry movement in Poland. During the interwar years, a tiny number of fine artists began to work with jewelry, and the Warsaw School of Fine Arts set up a Metal Technical Studies section. After World War II, other art institutions encouraged, or at least allowed, students to work in fine metals, and ultimately an art jewelry movement was born, Henryk Grunwald being among the most prominent artists of the time.

Catalogs published by the Gallery of Art in Legnica
Photo: M. Banaszkiewicz (Legnica 2019)

Kateřina Řezáčová – Czech Republic
My Own Silver (necklace), 2019
Silver hair, silver
Award of the Minister of Culture and National Hertitage + 1 kg of silver founded by the KGHM Polska Miedź S.A. company
Photo: Jerzy Malinowski

Elena Gorbunova – Russia
Ocean Evaporates (pendant), 2018
Plastic, pure untouched silver from 2nd prize "Identity" 26th Legnica International Jewellery Competition 2017, cord
Inhorgenta Munich Award – free stand at Inhorgenta Munich 2020
Photo: Jerzy Malinowski

Dot Melanin – Israel
left: *Brooch*, 2018
Silver, onyx, quartz crystal
right: *Ring*, 2018
Silver, onyx, quartz crystal
Honourable Mention of Goldsmithing Artists' Association – statuette
Photo: Jerzy Malinowski

Kacper Schiffers – Poland
Dark Side of Power, 2019
Silver, gold
Award of Polish Jewellery Publishing House – free stand at Summer Trade Fair JUBINALE 2019 and advertisement in Polish Jewellery Catalogue
Photo: Jerzy Malinowski

[Legnica] is an important art center, and for six weeks every late spring and early summer it becomes a major jewelry destination as it hosts the annual Festival of Silver.

Private opening of the exhibition "Remains of the Feast" by Assamblage Association (Romania)
Photo: M. Banaszkiewicz
(Legnica 2019)

Mihaela Caravan – Romania
Fast Art (necklace), 2018
Sterling silver, paper posters
Fast Art (bracelet), 2018
Sterling silver, paper posters
Exhibition "Remains of the Feast" by Assamblage Association (Romania)
Photo: Jerzy Malinowski

The success of the Festival of Silver is all the more stunning given the shaky foundations of the contemporary jewelry movement in Poland.

In 1947 the Ministry of Culture and Art set up the Production Aesthetics Supervision Bureau, which ruled, *inter alia*, that all artistic activities should be considered equal; in essence, there was no hierarchy of fine arts, design, or crafts. It is comforting to know that at least one communist Centrally Planned Economy decree had a positive effect on the visual arts.

Consequently, the jewelry movement began to prosper during what were otherwise grim years, a time when silver was hard to come by and gold more or less forbidden. Even in the early years of the Festival of Silver, all entries were expected to contain a percentage of copper, such were the scarcities of precious metals and the easy availability of base metal.

Even before Poland's accession to the European Union, liberalization of the economy and improved prosperity resulted in many jewelers turning their attention to designing for production, which prompted the festival organizers' decision to henceforth promote only jewelry as art, rather than jewelry as designed product.

By the turn of the twenty-first century, Legnica had become Poland's center for the art of jewelry, but there were two festivals which really put the city on the international map. In 2004 *Birthday Party* celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary by the inclusion of over eighty specially invited international jewelers, but perhaps it was the 2006 event, with the theme of *Scandal!*, which really made the major impact. Some of the work selected from the competition

Anna i Witold Chudzikowie (Tryb) – Poland
On Point, 2019
Installation, silver, paper, plastic
Honourable Mention of the Director of the Gallery of Art in Legnica – 0.25 kg of silver founded by the KGHM Polska Miedź S.A. company.
Photo: Paweł Kaczyński

Darijus Gerlikas – Lithuania
Artist's Silver, 2018/2019
Silver, plastic trash
The Organizers' Special Award for creative courage and uncompromising attitude, innovation or sense of humour – "Silver Spur" + 1 kg of silver founded by KGHM Polska Miedź S.A.
Photo: Paweł Kaczyński

entries, while not thought by the jury to be particularly outrageous or scandalous, certainly offended members of the public, the media, and the Catholic Church, which considered at least one of the works to be blasphemous. (That was a film by German artist Gisbert Stach of a silver gem-studded cross immersed in a bath of nitric acid and slowly dissolving, leaving only the semiprecious stones in a solution of silver nitrate.) National right-wing politicians became involved, there were calls for the director to be sacked, complaints were made to the Public Prosecutor's office, and the exhibition was closed temporarily. The Ministry of Culture and National Heritage withdrew its support, KGHM terminated the funding agreement, and several of the festival exhibitions and events were cancelled.

The real "scandal" was perhaps rather more the eschewing of the physical for the ephemeral: a piece of "jewelry" that only existed as a DVD or on a screen. Blasphemy never entered into the equation. One might well argue that as recently as 2006 a moving image as an avatar for physical jewelry should hardly have seemed extraordinary. But bad news turned out to be really good publicity, as it often does. Galeria Sztuki and the Festival of Silver bounced back with renewed vigor, support was reinstated, the episode encouraged entrants to subsequent competitions to be more adventurous in what they thought of as jewelry. Today the event continues to plow a distinctive and idiosyncratic furrow.

The Gallery's publishing activities add to its profile: a good-quality catalogue is produced for each exhibition, which has led to an excellent archive of printed matter, recording almost every event that has ever taken place. The permanent collection being amassed by the gallery will ultimately be a powerful cultural asset and an invaluable study tool, containing work representing all of the festivals over the years.

Attending the Legnica festival as an exhibitor or a visitor is a different experience to any other I know. There is a homelike quality to it that some sophisticates might scorn, but it is that openness and friendliness, generous hospitality and enthusiasm, which make it such an enjoyable experience. There is internationally recognized work alongside more prosaic jewelry; some work is confrontational and questioning while some entertains and amuses; there are different levels of intellectual and academic engagement; there is exuberance alongside deadly seriousness. It is like a small-scale Schmuck, which is impressive considering it is produced on a fraction of the resources. The only way to understand the Legnica Festival of Silver is take part in it, enjoy the art and the discourse, and soak up the atmosphere.

Norman Cherry is an independent jewelry artist, curator, and consultant. He was formerly Pro Vice Chancellor for Arts at the University of Lincoln, UK, and, prior to that, was Head of the Birmingham School of Jewellery.

1 Its director, Zbigniew Kraska, and senior curator, Monika Spatowicz, with their very small and very committed staff, were the powers behind this successful event for several years. Kraska's successor, Dr. Justyna Teodorczuk, has been in her post since the beginning of 2019 and, if this year's event is any measure of success, has picked up the baton with vigor.

at some point you've got to pull your head out and make some concrete decisions

Lisa Walker's disruptive jewelry

By Liesbeth den Besten

Who
SANDRA'S REVENGE
Hotter than ever, the flirty star steps out for the first time since the cheating scandal
PLUS Jesse's new custody battle
Backstage with ROB & KRISTEN
DEATH OF A TV ICON
'YES, I AM TOO THIN'
KATE HUDSON'S SECRET BABY
Weekly
JUDY TELLS ALL
A BROTHER FOR CONJOINED TWINS

Above:
Low Culture Necklace, 2010
Magazines, brass, thread
650 x 600 x 25 mm
Collection: Stedelijk Museum's-Hertogenbosch (Design Museum Den Bosch)
Photo: Lisa Walker

Previous spread:
Poster, 2016
160 x 120 x 30 mm
Collaborative work Åbäke and Lisa Walker, for the *0 + 0 = 0* publication

Chicks on Speed and Lisa Walker
Brooch, 2004
Plastic, hand printed fabric by COS and Jeremy Scott
180 x 40 x 40 mm
Photo: Lisa Walker

lisa walker

has been called an iconoclast, a provocateur, and (unofficially) a tinkerer and a crook. Her jewelry incites enthusiasm and disgust; it is about our culture, society, her surroundings, and the times we are living in. It reflects and reacts, and is wearable. Her jewelry lets us think about what jewelry is or can be, and at the same time makes us think about our values. It requires engagement from the viewer and wearer.

Although some people shudder at the sight of the New Zealand artist's subversive and utterly un-beautiful jewelry, it was chosen as the subject of the opening exhibition at the new art gallery at the National Museum in Wellington in March 2018—a great honor.[1] Walker is indeed a successful artist. She exhibits and publishes all over the world at a tremendous pace.

According to Walker, "Jewelry is more a medium I landed in than a chosen one." Making art appeals to her because she sees it as the basis of humanity. Yet jewelry has a special attraction: "What I enjoy about making jewelry are the boundaries that define it: weight, size,

Necklace, 2019
Merino, acrylic paint, stuffing, thread
680 x 300 x 120 mm
Courtesy Gallery Funaki, Melbourne, Australia
Photo: Lisa Walker

Wire experiments, No.1, 1989
Copper, thread, photo
80 x 20 x 20 mm
Photo: Mike O'Neill

"Jewelry is a perfectly viable medium in which to make art and express what I desire."

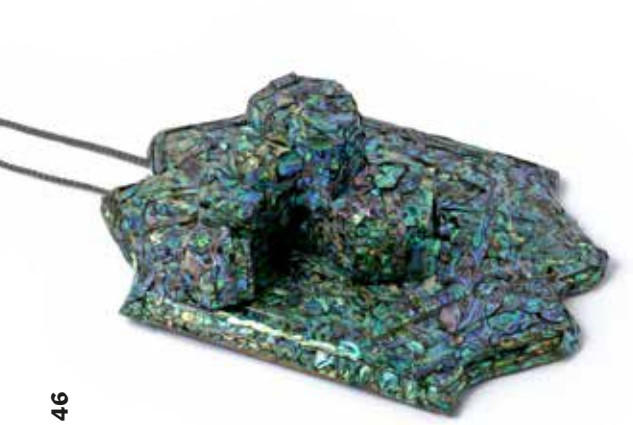
materials, connection to the body. I enjoy its history and its contemporary story, both those connected to goldsmithing as well as to jewelry and adornment in other cultures. Jewelry is a perfectly viable medium in which to make art and express what I desire."[2]

Instead of traditional materials, Walker chooses to work with secondhand items of our consumer culture that she sees as imbued with stories. She buys objects on Trade Me (a New Zealand internet auction website), in shops, and other places, but she also notices conversations, ideas, attitudes, a trend in fashion or art, a quotation. "I'm now more influenced by what I find online on sites such as Instagram," she says. "These are the places that are available; they surround me, they are part of my culture and life." How she chooses from the abundance has to do with the impact it has on her. "There will be something

In here is a fart and a pearl, 2009
Plastic, ink, freshwater pearl, thread
200 x 60 x 60 mm
Courtesy Galerie Biro, Munich, Germany
Photo: Lisa Walker

Pendant, 2015
Pounamu (greenstone), silver, thread
240 x 170 x 15 mm
Te Papa Museum, Wellington,
New Zealand
Private collection, Australia
Photo: Lisa Walker

Pendant, 2010
Paua veneer, wood, thread
Collection Te Papa Museum,
Wellington, New Zealand
220 x 169 x 80 mm
Photo: Lisa Walker



that resonates with me," she says. "That is not something I control; it just happens. I don't always have to understand why I'm attracted to a particular object or idea. I trust the resonance."

Walker's jewelry shows the chaos that engulfs us, and our dumped possessions that are bounced back to us. Her work can be interpreted as a statement (*Low Culture Necklace*, 2010), as an offense (*In here is a fart and a pearl*, 2009), as disruptive (the cute and fluffy necklace made from real taxidermy ducklings, 2016), as political (*Pussy Riot necklace*, 2013), as recycling (a necklace from made from discarded cell phones, 2009), or as an act of appropriation or stealing (*Painting by A. Wood, Paraparaumu, New Zealand, made in the likeness of Vincent van Gogh, necklace*, 2010).

Although Walker's jewelry might appear simple, sloppy, and unskilled, she has both a diverse and thorough training and an experimental spirit that has moved her forward. In 1988 Walker enrolled at the new two-year Craft Design program at Otago Polytechnic Art School in Dunedin. Here she attended a week-long titanium workshop with Elena Gee (a New Zealand jeweler from the Bone, Stone, Shell generation[3]) that sparked her love for metal and the tools that shape it. Georg Beer, a German-trained goldsmith, taught her the basic techniques as well as an attitude of respect and honesty in working with metal and goldsmithing history.

In 1989 Walker made *Wire Experiments*, a body of work that demonstrated her interest in applying textile techniques, such as weaving, in metal. Subsequent metalwork was based on simple techniques such as bending, stretching, and rolling sheet material, indicative of a directness and spontaneity in the handling of materials that would remain a crucial part of her work going forward.

After attending a lecture in Auckland by Karl Fritsch and Alex Murray-Leslie, two students from the Munich Arts Academy, Walker decided she had to go to the academy to learn more. In 1995 she enrolled in the jewelry class of Otto Künzli. At first she continued working in metal, but began using other materials, intuitively choosing them based on memories from home. "By chance I pulled up another little table next to my jewelry bench and threw some fabric, cardboard, and glue on it," she says. "I was thinking of my mother and her feminist mates, the aesthetic they have in their clothes and houses, and began

throwing together some things that were influenced by them....I didn't see them as a big deal or a big change." It was only after some "dabbling" that she became aware of the potential power of working with alternative materials.

In her early years in Germany, Walker's work consisted of accumulations of found objects and materials. White furniture stuffing found on the road ended up on her little table, because it reminded her of seeing snow for the first time in her life. Glue, a material that opposes our ideas of craftsmanship, became an integral part of her jewelry: she gave it color, mass, and physical presence. The display tables Walker created for her diploma show at the Munich Academy in 2004 were full of small things that had a rather undefined character: some were brooches or pendants, many were not. The subtitle of her exhibition, "a collection of finished pieces of jewellery, experiments, and pieces that may become jewellery," expressed her experimental and ambivalent attitude toward traditional jewelry, in which beauty, perfection, and smoothness reign—even in contemporary work.

Diploma exhibition (with detail), Munich Arts Academy, 2004

Photo: Karl Fritsch

Necklace, 2007
Plastic, glue, wool
Courtesy Masterworks, Auckland, New Zealand
450 x 400 x 100 mm
Photo: Lisa Walker

Rubbish From My Workshop Floor (brooch), 2006
Various materials, glue
100 x 80 x 15 mm
Photo: Lisa Walker

Opposite:
Necklace, 2016
Taxidermy ducklings, thread, steel compound
300 x 220 x 60 mm
Te Papa Museum, Wellington, New Zealand
Photo: Lisa Walker

In 2004 Walker exhibited at Galerie Oona in Berlin with the electroclash and performance group Chicks on Speed (Alex Murray-Leslie, Melissa Logan, and Kiki Moorse), which formed at the Munich Academy. She collaborated with the group for about seven months, using their leftover fabrics and other scrap materials, inspired by their lyrics and conversations. Walker made a collection of fast, cheap, and not very solid jewelry with safety pins.[4] Each piece cost ninety-nine cents, the title of Chicks on Speed's second album (*99 ¢* released in 2003, Chicks on Speed Records). In this period, stuffed textile pieces also entered her work. The collaboration was important for Walker, as it set free ideas that were already latent, and made her aware of the importance of being influenced by other artists, trends, and cultures. Her work grew bigger and more colorful.

As a lover of visual culture and communication, Walker is interested in the book as a medium. After the publication of her first small book, documenting her diploma exhibition in 2004, Walker published *Unwearable* (2008). With its unusual size of 13 by 51 centimeters, the book is the physical manifestation of a comment that is often delivered about her jewelry: the misconception that it is unwearable. Her next book, *Wearable* (2011), was a collection of full-page selfies of Walker wearing her jewelry. Then came *0+0=0* (2016), a collaboration with the transdisciplinary design collective Åbäke.[5] The book's design played with images and fonts in ways that validated the in-between, elusive, and subversive nature of Walker's work.[6] In early 2019, *An unreliable guidebook to jewellery by Lisa Walker* was published by RMIT Design Hub Gallery in Melbourne, Australia. Apart from the images, central to the book are the many quotes that are important to Walker from her writing and the writings of others.

By the time *Wearable* was published, Walker had already moved back to New Zealand with her partner Karl Fritsch and their children. After fifteen years of living in Germany, she looked at New Zealand with fresh eyes. Everything amazed her. Inspired by this new awareness, she made *Newtown necklace* (2010), named after the neighborhood where she had her workshop. Says Walker, "The Newtown Necklace (…) was made of finger puppets bought at the Newtown festival, held once a year, filled with music, hippie crafts, and food stalls, a throwback to my childhood. The finger puppets became symbolic of that attitude: my childhood and life in New Zealand in the '70s, mixed with contemporary culture."

"If someone gifts me an object, then the act of giving it to me is enough reason to use it somehow in my work..."

Unwearable (special editions), 2008
Darling Publications, Cologne/New York
520 x 150 x 25 mm
Photo: Lisa Walker

As an artist who is strongly influenced by her surroundings, it's not surprising that Walker also reflects on the influence of Maori culture in her life and society. Her Maori-inspired jewelry is blunt, unpolished, and offers a new chapter to the interpretation of Maori influences by New Zealand artists that began in the 1980s with artist such as Alan Preston and Warwick Freeman. Where the artists of *Bone Stone Shell*, the landmark 1988 exhibition developed by the New Zealand Craft Council, paid respect to the utterly ignored indigenous art of the Maori, Walker's answers came in the form of a series of pendants made from colored paua shell veneer, a kitschy material with a sticky back that is mainly used in the tourist industry. Her pounamu stone pendants, compositions made of glued-together leftovers of indigenous greenstone, are a painful break with the much appreciated and honored stoneworking tradition in New Zealand. These pieces speak about respect and care for the leftovers of our consumer society, confronting us with our waste.

Similar confrontations arise in her necklace made from six fluffy taxidermy ducklings. Walker didn't kill these cute creatures. It is industry that did, a truth nobody likes to face. However, this piece of Walker's evoked much discussion and anger when posted on an Instagram feed.[7] It is interesting to notice that people can't accept that jewelry can be used to make a statement. Walker understands the interaction between a statement and the body, but it is telling that this piece ended up in a museum collection and not around the neck of a dedicated follower of contemporary jewelry.[8]

Someone might think her way of working is easy—putting things together and attaching a cord—but the process involved in Walker's work is very important. Some objects may inspire a direct response, while another object may linger in her studio for some time before she finds a use for it. In rare cases, the story of the process has become part of the piece, as with a necklace made from a leather bag that was given to her: "If someone gifts me an object, then the act of giving it to me is enough reason to use it somehow in my work. The fact they have chosen that material with my work in mind." The bag (used as a pendant) is covered under a text describing the genesis of the work, how she was gifted this bag, that she imagined it covered with spraypainted dots, and how these dots didn't look the way she wanted them. Here she is actually busy "decorating the decoration."[9] The one who owns this necklace becomes part of the story by reading it and wearing the bag in its new role of a pendant as a testimony.

Walker's 2018 retrospective exhibition *I Want To Go To My Bedroom But I Can't Be Bothered* (a title that deserves careful consideration) opened in New Zealand, and traveled to Australia, and the Netherlands. The installation design (by Walker) was

Someone might think her way of working is easy – putting things together and attaching a cord – but the process involved in Walker's work is very important.

Painting by A.Wood, Paraparaumu, New Zealand, made in the likeness of Vincent van Gogh, 2010
Canvas, acrylic paint, stuffing, thread
700 x 500 x 50 mm
Private collection, London
Photo: Lisa Walker

Newtown Necklace, 2010
Knitted finger puppets
500 x 350 x 60 mm
Collection: Françoise van den Bosch Foundation / Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Photo: Lisa Walker

Opposite:
Pendant, 2010
Leather bag, spray paint, ink, string
620 x 450 x 20 mm
Photo: Lisa Walker

different in each venue. Thanks to impressive architectonic interventions and subtly painted surfaces, Walker created adventurous presentations immersing viewers in her bewildering world. "When the intention is solely to make something weird," she says "the piece is always good."[10] Anyone who takes the time to look beyond the weirdness discovers that Lisa Walker is empowering jewelry with critical and social engagement in ways that have never been done before.

Liesbeth den Besten is an art historian, based in the Amsterdam region, who works as an independent writer, teacher, lecturer, and curator. She teaches jewelry history at Sint Lucas Academy in Antwerp. Her book, On Jewellery: A Compendium of International Contemporary Art Jewellery, *was published by Arnoldsche in November 2011.*

1 The exhibition *I Want To Go To My Bedroom But I Can't Be Bothered* is a retrospective showing thirty years of jewelry by Lisa Walker. / **2** This and all other quotations are from e-mail interviews with Lisa Walker, answered on February 20, 2018, and May 31, 2018. / **3** The traveling exhibition *Bone Stone Shell: New Jewellery New Zealand* (1988), was the first milestone in New Zealand jewelry. It identified jewelry by the indigenous materials used and the idiosyncratic style that was a result of the materials and the influence of Maori culture. / **4** Andy Lim, Lisa Walker, Lisa Walker: *Unwearable* (Darling Publications, Cologne & New York, 2008), 161-168. / **5** Åbäke in Swedish means 'something in the way, something clumsy, monstrosity'. / **6** *0+0+0* was a collaborative project with Dent de Leone and Åbäke from London. / **7** https://www.instagram.com/liesbethdenbesten/?hl=nl Posted on April 22, 2019. / **8** The necklace was acquired by the National Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington. / **9** Kate Rhodes, Nella Themelios, An Unreliable Guidebook to Jewellery by Lisa Walker (RMIT Design Hub Gallery, RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia, 2019), 127. / **10** Ibid, 437.

PRIED

Society of Arts and Crafts, Boston, MA
4.25.19 – 6.30.19

By Allison Geremia

During Pride Month it can be hard not to envision the commodification of a marginalized group of people. From rainbow clothing to accessories, the inclusion of LGBT+ dialogues in June often seems economically driven rather than contributing to a positive safe space on behalf of a community. However, the Society of Arts and Crafts has managed to not only introduce LGBT+ artists into a space, but to do so in an encouraging way that welcomes both informed and uninformed viewers to participate.

View from the entrance of Pried exhibition at the Society of Arts and Crafts, Boston MA. Photo courtesy of Society of Arts and Crafts.

Curators Izzy Berdan and Dave J. Bermingham surveyed craft artists throughout the United States as a means of celebrating LGBT+ identity in all of its conditions. Representing a selection of methods, the exhibition brought together the work of more than thirty artists. As a whole, the exhibition looks at LGBT+ craft artists and makers through their self-identification, rather than by the subject matter. While the theme of the show joined artists by autobiographical criteria, the exhibition provided no artist statements, thus encouraging viewers to engage with the objects. This approach refuted self-identity as a marker of exclusivity or divergence, and allowed the dialogue between an object and viewer to emerge on its own terms. *PRIED* emphasized the opportunity for the individual expression of the practitioner to communicate organically with the public. This approach contributes to a positive dialogue on behalf of the community.

Many works at the exhibition were narrative, pertaining to gender identity and societal interpretations; others focused primarily on sexuality; and lastly there was work that was not LGBT+ subject-specific.

Berdan and Bermingham framed the gallery entrance with a mural by Brian Kenny, which opened onto two spaces separated by an exhibition wall. Upon entering, the salon-style method of presentation surrounded the viewer in an immersive visual experience. Greeted by a white Vivian Beer bench, the subject matter invited the visitor to become a part of the dialogue rather than highlight differences between the "self" and "other." By being seated and observing, one was allowed to become a part of the gallery landscape.

Many pieces looked at the nature of wearing, being worn, and deconstructing markers of identity. Probably the most successful piece of adornment was Maxine Hwang Blomberg's *Ye Olde Bergina Collar* (2019). The piece hung on a single fishing line in a corner of the gallery and gently moved with the natural airflow in the space. Like Beer's two benches, the viewer was invited to participate by trying on the collar. The yonic imagery and historical reference to Elizabethan display was clearly demonstrated. Elizabeth I and her dedication to the perception of virginity and "control" of her sexuality was one of the many

Mac McCusker, *A Little Worse for the Wear: A Transgender Self-Portrait*, 2019. 24 x 18 x 14 in. Photo: Mac McCusker.

Maxine Hwang Blomberg, *Ye Olde Bergina Collar*, (installation view), 2019. 40 x 26 in. Photo: Allison Geremia.

ways that she used chastity, and therefore an emphasis on her sexual behavior, as a method of demonstrating her dedication to her people and country. Wearing a work such as *Ye Olde Bergina Collar*, underscores that gender is not merely switching between poles, but is a subtlety that one navigates both sexually and socially.

Other works like *A Little Worse for the Wear: A Transgender Self-Portrait* by Mac McCusker (2019) are more specific about identity as transitional, social, and subtle. McCusker's narrative sculpture of red earthenware depicts a person stitching their clothing back together. The figure reads as very masculine, but the underglaze reveals more about the narrative. The clothing of the sculpture, behind the holes, depicts a transgender symbol (⚧), which is hard to see at first. When looking more closely, a viewer will also notice the Keith Haring stylized tattoo figures on the right leg and the left leg engulfed in tattooed fire reading 'CLAYGYRL' through the center. The nature of social viewership, the way one views oneself, and the portrayal of identity to the social "other" comes together in a relatable way through McCusker's piece.

The *PRIED* exhibition revealed many different viewpoints regarding gender identity and body politics. With 2019 marking the fiftieth anniversary of the Stonewall riots, this timely exhibition reminds us that craft often looks toward the past in order to embrace the future.

Allison Geremia is a decorative arts historian and writer from New England.

Statecraft: Selections from the Jewelry Collection of the Danish Arts Foundation

Houston Center for Contemporary Craft, TX
3.15.19 – 6.23.19

By Keelin Burrows

The exhibition *Statecraft: Selections from the Jewelry Collection of the Danish Arts Foundation,* featured at the Houston Center for Contemporary Craft (HCCC) in Texas from March 15 to June 23, provided a broad overview of the past five decades of studio-made jewelry in Denmark. A collaboration between HCCC staff and the Danish Arts Foundation, the exhibition showcased the foundation's initiative—to collect, support, and promote the jewelry work of innovative and prominent Danish studio artists and designers of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.[1] As a result, more than eighty works by move than forty artists were presented.[2]

The elegantly designed installation presented select works or groupings of works by individual jewelry designers and progressed chronologically by the year the first work by each jeweler was acquired by the foundation, which allowed the exhibition to generally unfold by decade. However, this framework was not made explicit to the viewer, which caused the selection and presentation of works to seem a bit random and superficial at times. What this framework did provide is a panorama of the wide variety of materials and approaches to jewelry making that have defined Danish jewelry design over the last half

Katrine Borup, *Bispekabe – en paraphrase*, 2019. 5 x 55 x 55 cm. Weight: 328 grams. Photo courtesy of Søren Nielsen.

View from *Statecraft: Selections from the Jewelry Collection of the Danish Arts Foundation*, 2019, at Houston Center for Contemporary Craft. Photo: Katy Anderson.

century. As stated by one of the organizers, the intent was to demonstrate the evolution and breadth of the holdings within the collection, as well as to highlight significant arcs in the careers of individual artists when possible.[3]

The first object acquired by the foundation in 1978, a sleek silver *Armring* (or *Bracelet)* by Ole W. Jacobsen from 1957, marked the beginning of the installation. This bracelet, the only exhibited work made prior to 1970, served as a visual reminder of the functionalism that defined Denmark as the birthplace of modernism, as well as signifying a point of departure for the works that followed. The exhibited objects made with precious materials showcased how a variety of stylistic and conceptual approaches persisted into the twenty-first century, alongside the use of nontraditional materials that largely define the time period covered by the exhibition.

Several of the works from the 1970s and early 1980s demonstrated how jewelers continued to use precious materials to create conservative, organic modernist designs, such as the silver *Armring* (or *Bracelet*) (1979) by Ingomar Vangsgaard. Meanwhile, Irene Greigst, Arje Greigst, and Torben Hardenberg used gold, silver, and gemstones to take a more fanciful approach, drawing inspiration from fables, fantasies, and myths. In contrast, Ole Bent Petersen notoriously combined precious metals with everyday (often banal) imagery, such as printed ticket stubs and metal wire hangers, creating visual commentaries on popular culture. Eventually, a freer, more fluid and expressive use of gold and silver emerged in the 1990s. The use of precious metals to capture the essence of emotion or convey more personal and intimate narratives can be seen in the works by Ulrick Jungersen, Kasia Gasparski, Nicolai Appel, and Claus Berring.

One with knowledge of the field cannot help but situate these artists within the context of the debate surrounding precious materials taking place in the Netherlands in the 1980s and 1990s.[4] Unfortunately, the exhibition offered no interpretative information to guide the uninitiated visitor, nor any contextual information to locate the works within the broader history of the field. The white walls surrounding the exhibition display in the center of the gallery were bare except for a brief introductory text that was translated into Danish and Spanish, while the labels only provided basic object information with the titles of the works given in the native or chosen language of the maker (predominantly Danish) with no translations.[5]

Without further didactic information, it was difficult for the visitor to understand how Danish artists were being influenced by other designers or international trends taking place abroad in places like Germany, the Netherlands, Britain, and even America—where artists were pioneering the use of nontraditional materials as early as the 1960s and 1970s. For instance, the influence of American jeweler Arline Fisch's woven wire body adornments could be seen in pieces by the artists Hanne Behrens.[6] Meanwhile, works by Mikkala Naur and Kim Buck demonstrated how some Danish artists began experimenting in the 1980s with found objects and "ready-mades," often combining them with precious metals—an international trend that had begun in jewelry much earlier.

Experimentation with nonprecious materials and constructivist tendencies could be seen in work by Eva Dora Lam, who combines the precision of her goldsmith's training with geometric pieces of glass or Plexiglas and polished steel. Similarly, Peder Muse turned to experimenting with nonprecious materials in the late 1990s, using discarded wood to create works like

Ulrik Jungersen, *Broche*, 1992. Silver, gold (24k). 0.7 x 4.7 x 5 cm. Weight: 25 grams. Photo courtesy the Danish Arts Foundation Archives.

Ole Bent Petersen, *Bøjle*, 1987. Gold (18k). 7 x 6 x 6 cm. Inner perimeter: 17 cm. Weight: 22 grams Photo courtesy of the Danish Arts Foundation Archives.

Mikala Naur, *Feather*, 1983. Acrylic, rubber, feathers. Inner diameter: 7.2 cm. Outer perimeter: 33 cm. Weight: 39 grams. Photo courtesy the Danish Arts Foundation Archives.

his *Ruff* from 1998. Exhibited across the room from *Ruff, Armsmykke* (or *Arm Jewelry*) by Helle Løvig Espersen, combines silver with aramith (the industrial material used to make billiard balls) to create a sculptural, biomorphic form echoing the curves of the muscles and rounded joints of the body—a sort of contemporary reinterpretation of the organic modernism that defined Danish design in the mid-twentieth century.

In contrast to the 1990s, twenty-first-century artists who use precious materials often do so to draw attention to past or present value systems, such as Gerda and Nicolai Monies's bejeweled *Halskæde* (or *Necklace*).[7] Closer examination of the works from the past two decades reveal subjects related to the environment and reuse (Camille Prasch's *Mittendrin Rotglühend nr. 1*), as well as new ways of exploring the body as not only a site for presenting work, but for activating and completing it. Meanwhile, other artists imbue jewelry with a political or social agency, addressing the emblematic or status role of adornment (Katrine Borup's *Cape—a Paraphrase, for Lise-Lotte Rebel*). The perception of conservatism that defined the pedagogy and critical literature on Danish jewelry into the second half of the twentieth century continues to dissolve.[8]

However, continued exploration and progressive thinking can emerge from the Danish Arts Foundation's loan program, which was only briefly touched upon in the *Statecraft* introductory text panel. Danish citizens can borrow pieces to wear to official, special, and public events, even starting the application process online via the foundation's website, where all jewelry objects can be viewed in detail.[9] A small section of the website highlights a few borrowers with written accounts of their chosen adornments and attended events. The loan program and the accompanying online forum opens an interesting place for dialogue about how Danish studio jewelry is activated in real time and space, as well as how the life of these objects continues to evolve into the future.

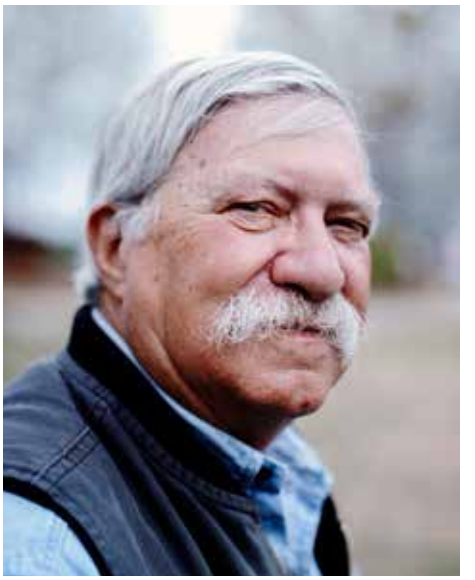
Finally, one cannot help but remind the reader that since the arrival of the Helen Williams Drutt English Collection of Contemporary Jewelry in 2002 at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH), the Bayou City has become a major destination for viewing and studying modern and contemporary art jewelry from around the world. However, despite this vast and growing collection, there is no Danish jewelry currently in the MFAH holdings. Therefore, presenting this work in Houston and situating it in an historical context was particularly pertinent and timely, making this recent exhibition even more significant and relevant.[10]

Keelin Burrows is an independent curator, writer, and educator living in Houston.

1 The foundation's jewelry initiative is carried out by a Crafts and Design Committee. / **2** Works were chosen by HCCC staff: Perry Price, Executive Director; Kathryn Hall, Curator; and María-Elisa Heg, Windgate Foundation Curatorial Fellow. / **3** Perry Price, email correspondence to author, June 12, 2019. / **4** Dutch jeweler Robert Smit advocated for the expressive potential of gold in his work and debated the avant-garde Dutch artist Gijs Bakker, who promoted the use of industrial materials. Strauss, Cindi (et al.), *Ornament as Art: Modern and Contemporary Jewelry from the Hellen Williams Drutt English Collection* (2007), 298. / **5** The following texts provided the author with historical and contextual information for the works in *Statecraft*: Funder, Lise. *The Art of Danish Jewellery: 1960-2000*. København: NYT Nordisk Forlag Arnold Busck, 2001; Strauss, Cindi, (et al.). *Ornament As Art: Modern and Contemporary Jewelry from the Hellen Williams Drutt English Collection*. Stuttgart, Germany: Arnoldsche Art Publishers, 2007. / **6** American jewelry artist Arline Fisch traveled to Denmark on a Fulbright scholarship in the 1950s and 1960s, and then returned in the 1970s to study textile design, which culminated in her publication Textile Techniques in *Metal for Jewellers* in 1975. Funder, *The Art of Danish Jewellery*, 86. / **7** It is not until the 1990s that the establishment in Denmark finally loosens its rigid requirement on formal goldsmith training and apprenticeships. Funder notes that Kirsten Clausager (who is represented in the *Statecraft* exhibition) "is the first person in Denmark not to have qualified as a goldsmith before gaining admission to the Institut for Ædelmetal in 1990 and completed her training there in 1992." (Funder, *The Art of Danish Jewellery*, 10). / **8** Funder, *The Art of Danish Jewellery*, 2001. / **9** *Staten Kunstfond* (The State Art Fund), https://vores.kunst.dk/objects, accessed on July 1, 2019./ **10** *Statecraft* is the first major selection of Danish jewelry from the Danish Arts Foundation to come to the United States. While the exhibition (as it has been presented in Houston) is not scheduled to travel to other venues in the U.S., the Foundation is hopeful the exhibition will be the first of other future collaborations and presentations across the United States. Select works from the exhibition will be included in upcoming shows in the next year in Glyptothek in München and Museum Für Angewendtes Kunst in Cologne.

JAMES A. WALLACE

BY CARISSA HUSSONG



James A. Wallace

Photo:
Houston Cofield

JAMES A. WALLACE ("WALLY") has never been one to toot his own horn. A legendary storyteller, he used his gifts to repeatedly defy the odds, turning coal into diamonds while laying the foundation for the present and future of metalsmithing in the United States. It is impossible to separate the leader from the artist. Wally's contributions include research and development, museum management, collecting, teaching, mentoring, and the creation of works of art.

The oldest of six children, Wally was an Army brat who attended nine schools before graduating from high school. His many adventures before discovering blacksmithing included working on the Crazy Horse Memorial near Mount Rushmore, in an underground silver mine, for an oil shale company, and on a Clark Mountain gold claim in California. While living in Crested Butte, Colorado, in the early '70s, he also served on the town council, was the town marshal, and spent three summers as the crew chief on a Hot Shot firefighting crew.

Then, after a brief apprenticeship under blacksmith Slim Spurling in Morrison, Colorado, Wally discovered the work of L. Brent Kington in *Craft Horizons* magazine. Kington, a professor at the School of Art and Design at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale (SIU), began experimenting with iron in the 1960s. Wally sought out Kington when he was demonstrating at a 1973 American Crafts Council conference in Fort Collins, Colorado. A year or so later Wally moved to SIU for graduate school, and began a lifelong friendship and exchange of ideas with Kington that forever changed the role of blacksmithing in contemporary art.

James A. Wallace
Table, ca. 1978
Walnut, mild steel
Collection of
Michael James
Photo: Murray Riss

While at SIU, Wally and three other "smithy students"—Daryl Meiers, Bob Griffith, and Joel Schwartz—became the research team that reintroduced pattern-forged steel to American metalsmiths. Wally was the lead author of a chapter on their research that was published in Dona Meilach's 1977 book *Decorative and Sculptural Ironwork*. "This book and Jim's research on modern day Damascus steel," notes Eric Ryser, "can still be found in about every knife maker's library...and continues to be a regularly cited source."[1] Even at this early stage in his career, Wally was experimenting and teaching others how to forge complicated forms and use blacksmithing in the creation of sculptural and functional objects. Kington credited Wally with teaching him as much about as blacksmithing as he taught Wally about design, noting that Wally was always the better smith.

During his second year at SIU, Wally took a year off to organize the exhibition *Iron: Solid Wrought USA* and the accompanying conference. Wally obtained two grants from the National Endowment for the Arts for the exhibition, which traveled to the Museum of Contemporary Craft in New York City and to the Renwick Gallery at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC. The conference and exhibition continue to be viewed as the standard bearer for blacksmithing conferences today.

Among the nearly 500 participants at the conference were several members of the National Ornamental and Miscellaneous Metals Association, who later approached Wally about starting a museum dedicated to architectural ironwork. What started as an adventure became a labor of love. It was *not* easy. Wally was the plumber, curator, electrician, membership coordinator, carpenter, shipper, painter, and jack-of-all trades who kept the place going. Few people would have lasted through the difficulties of those early years.

The Metal Museum in Memphis opened to the public in February 1979, and soon expanded its mission to include all metal art forms, including jewelry, sculpture, hollowware, and enamel. Richard Mawdsley observed that "over the next thirty years with hard work and his power of persuasion, [Wally] almost singlehandedly built the Metal Museum into the important center for the metal arts it is today."[2] The Metal Museum now includes galleries for rotating exhibitions and the display of permanent collections, a library with rare and notable books, folios and photographs, a sculpture garden, a metals shop complete with a smithy, a foundry, a small metals studio, and housing for apprentices and visiting artists.

Today, the Metal Museum's value extends well beyond its exhibitions and facilities. As the only institution of its kind, the Metal Museum is a place that actively promotes artists and their work, and plays a vital role in the recognition and collection of fine metalwork and the teaching of innovative practices. Linda Threadgill notes that "it is impossible to underestimate the importance of curatorial insight, collection, and documentation to the field of contemporary crafts and to our national culture. Without the efforts of Jim Wallace, and others like him, this important heritage would be lost."[3]

Over the years Wally has taught at leading craft schools throughout the country, including the Penland School of

James A. Wallace
Dome (with detail), 2001
Forged aluminum
Private collection, Memphis, TN
Designed by James A. Wallace and fabricated in the Metal Museum Blacksmith Shop
Photo: Murray Riss

James A. Wallace
Metal Museum 10th Anniversary Gates (detail), Memphis, TN, 1989. Designed by Richard Quinnell and fabricated at the Metal Museum with scrolls and rosettes provided by more than 170 metalsmiths from around the world
Photo: Chip Pankey

James A. Wallace
Table, date unknown
Photo: Meyers Walker

Crafts, Haystack Mountain School of Craft, and the Appalachian Center for Crafts, as well as demonstrated and lectured at conferences throughout the country and abroad. While these teaching opportunities have played an important role in the advancement of blacksmithing, Stephen Yusko also credits Wally for much of his development, as well as that of the many others whom Wally mentored, as an artist and blacksmith. "In what I think is one of his greatest contributions to our field, he established an apprenticeship program, thereby ensuring the continued sharing of metalsmithing's history, techniques, and new ideas."[4] Numerous artists have worked in the blacksmith shop Wally built on the grounds of the Museum, including Yusko, John Medwedeff, Japheth Howard, and Chris Winterstein. Many have gone on to successful careers as public artists, designers, fabricators, and teachers.

During Wally's thirty-year career as a museum director, he remained committed to his own artwork, forging in the evenings and securing large-scale commissions for his team of blacksmiths. His distinct Art Nouveau style, characterized by a fishtail design, has been emulated by many young artists. He has a strong sense of design, using craft media as an expressive form. His aesthetic and approach to design also influenced European smiths, who are often still heavily grounded in traditional forms.

In addition to the Society of North American Goldsmiths' Lifetime Achievement Award, Wally has been awarded lifetime achievement awards by the National Ornamental and Miscellaneous Metals Association and the Artist Blacksmith's Association of North America, as well as fellowships from the Tiffany Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Tennessee Arts Commission, and is a member of the American Craft Council College of Fellows. And like his mentor and many other recipients of this honor from SNAG, his letters have been archived by the Smithsonian Institute of American Art.

Gary Griffin summed up Wally's contributions brilliantly: "His professional lifetime of service to others, his professional lifetime of service to the greater field of metalsmithing, and his ability to make something substantial out of nothing stand as accomplishments beyond the exceptional. The Metal Museum exits because of Jim Wallace. Generations of metalsmiths have benefited: many more will in the future."[5]

Thank you, Wally, for all you have done for the field and for the many people whose lives you have touched through your work and selfless dedication.

James A. Wallace
Haystack Lightning Rod, ca. 1982
Mild steel with glass by Dale Chihuly and William Morris
Photo by the artist

Carissa Hussong is Executive Director of the Metal Museum, a position she has held since Wally's retirement at the end of 2007.

1 Ryser, Eric, Lifetime Achievement Nomination for James A. Wallace, Society of North American Goldsmiths, 2014. / **2** Mawdsely, Richard, Lifetime Achievement Nomination for James A. Wallace, Society of North American Goldsmiths, 2014. / **3** Threadgill, Linda, Lifetime Achievement Nomination for James A. Wallace, Society of North American Goldsmiths, 2014. / **4** Yusko, Stephen, Lifetime Achievement Nomination for James A. Wallace, Society of North American Goldsmiths, 2014. / **5** Griffin, Gary, Lifetime Achievement Nomination for James A. Wallace, Society of North American Goldsmiths, 2014.

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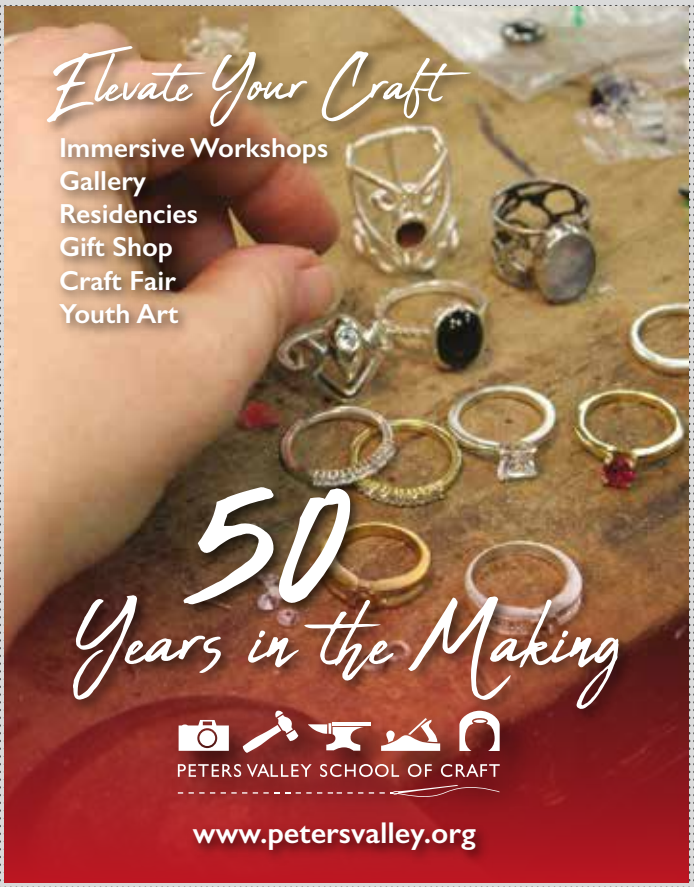

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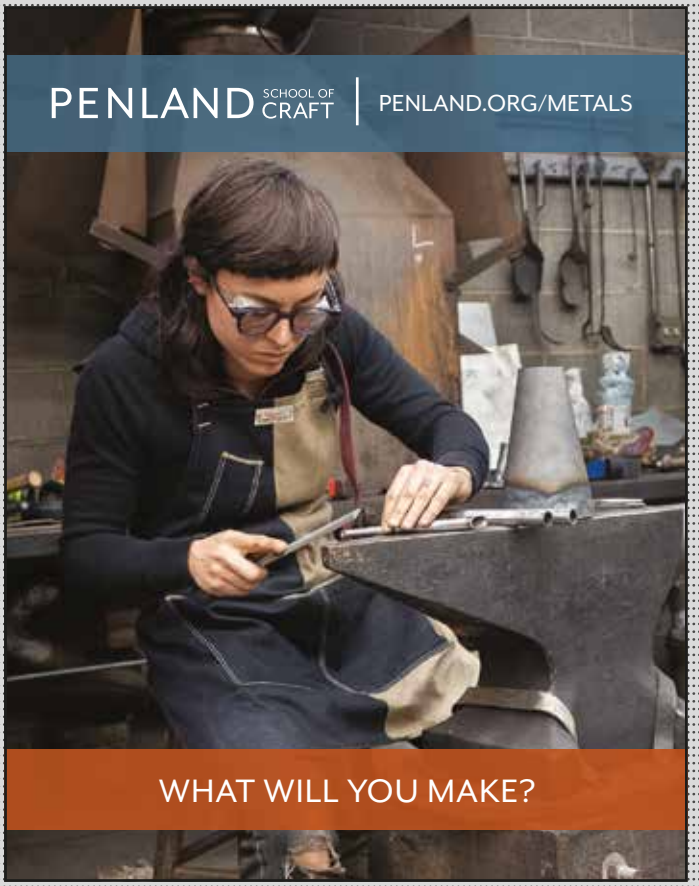

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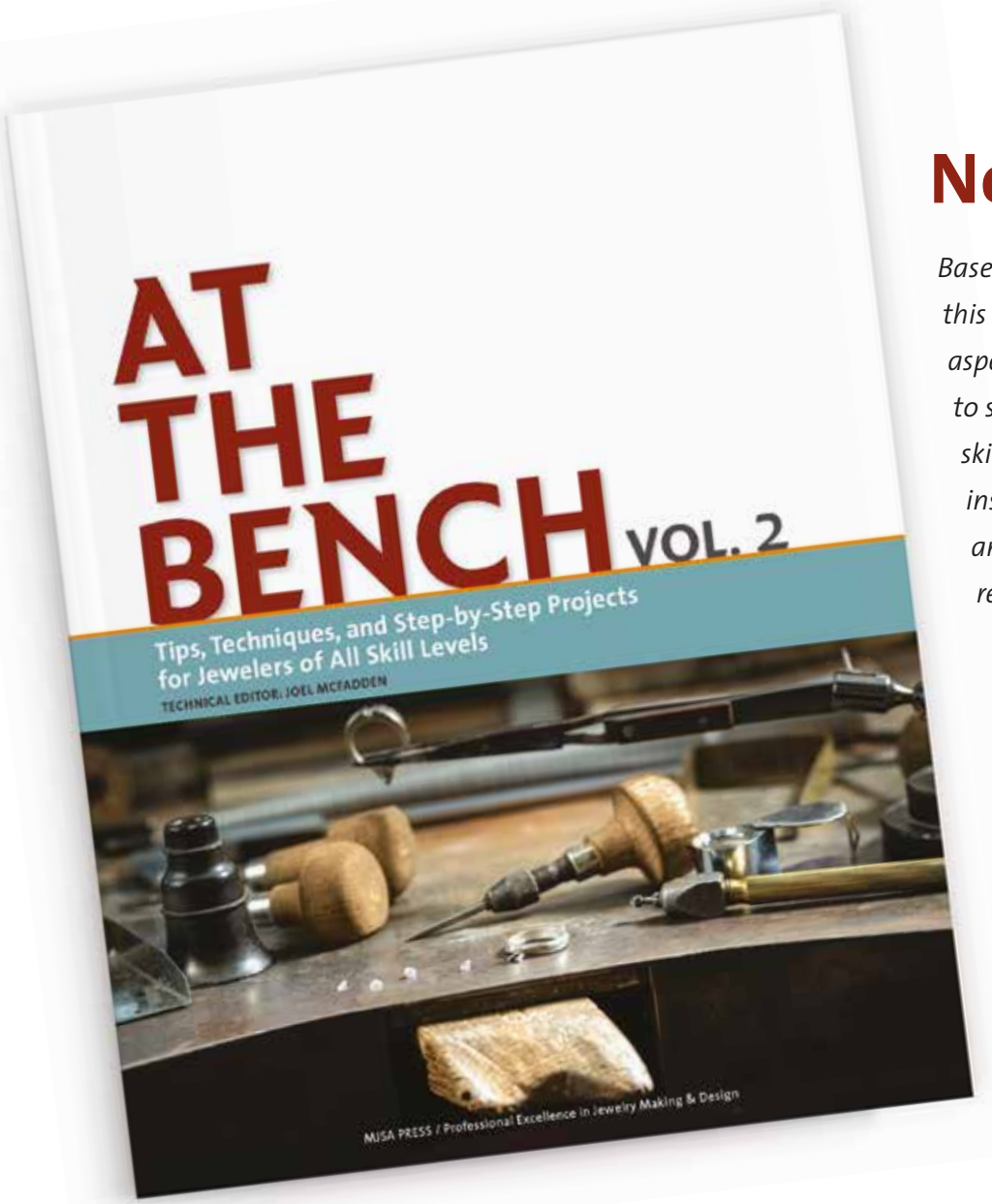
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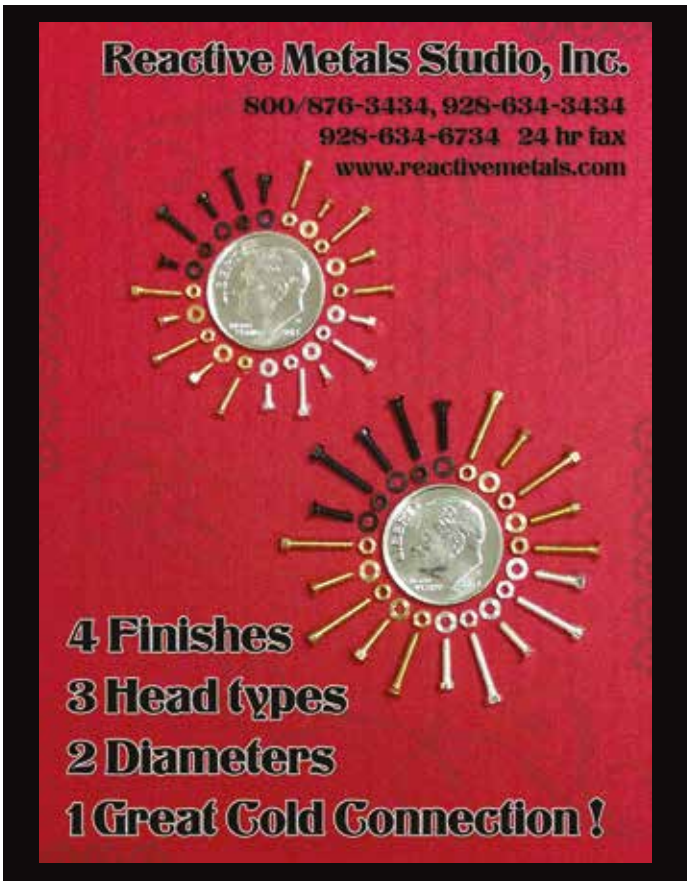

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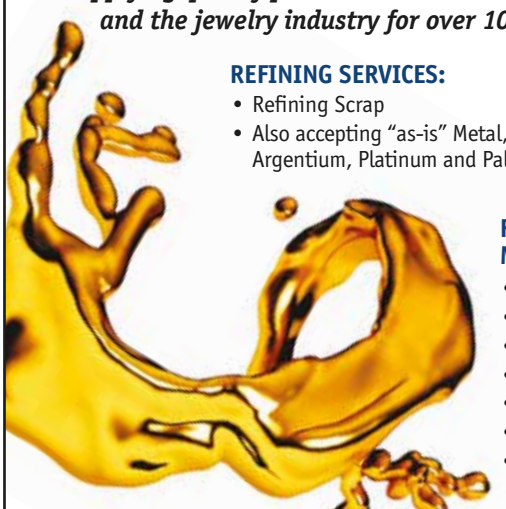

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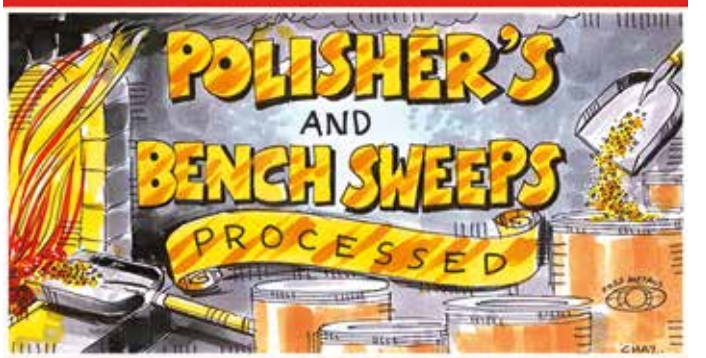

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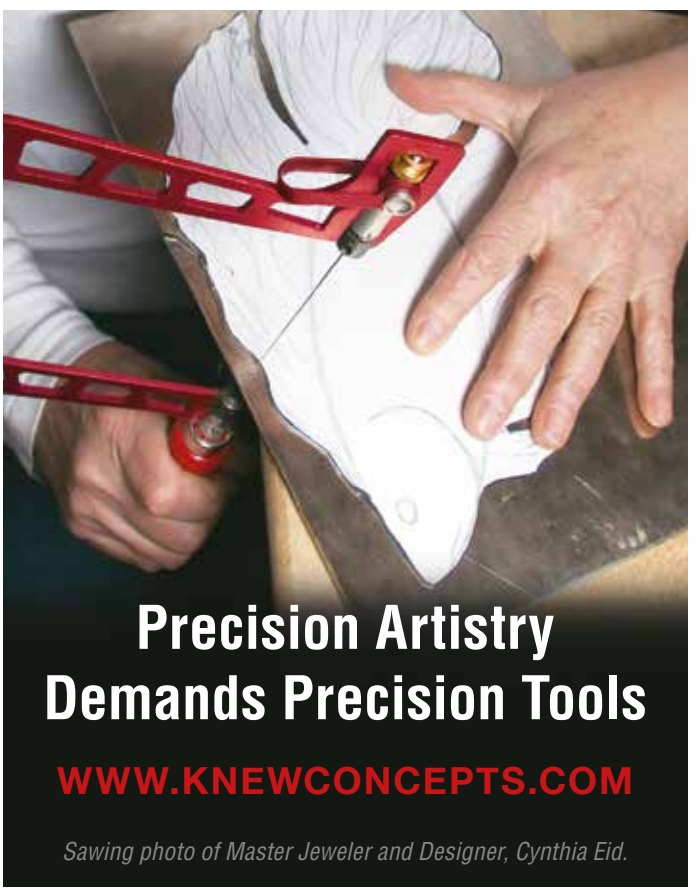

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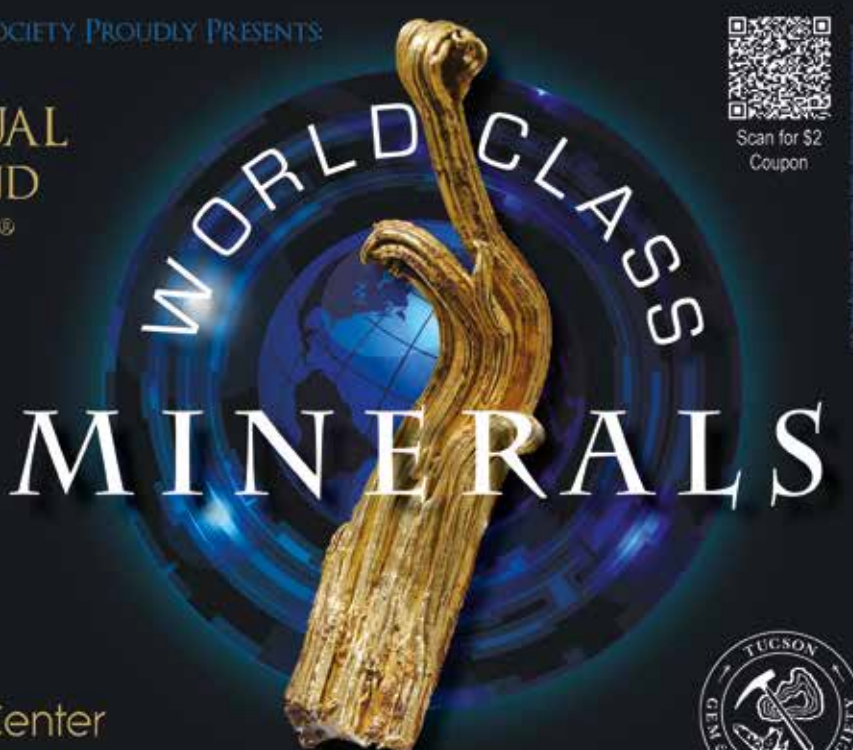

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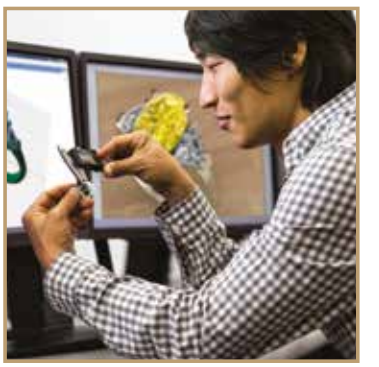

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